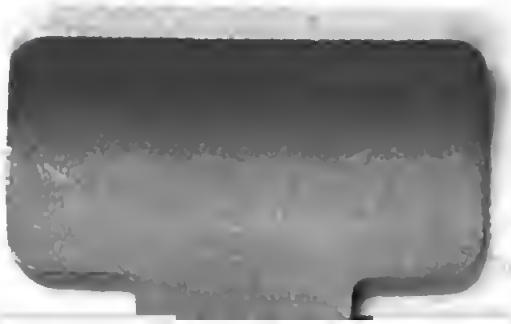




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VOL. 648.

THE INVASION OF THE CRIMEA
BY
ALEXANDER WILLIAM KINGLAKE.

VOL. 1.

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BY

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VOL. I.

MUSEO D'ISTRUZIONE
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THE

INVASION OF THE CRIMEA:

ITS ORIGIN,

AND

AN ACCOUNT OF ITS PROGRESS

DOWN TO THE DEATH OF

LORD RAGLAN.

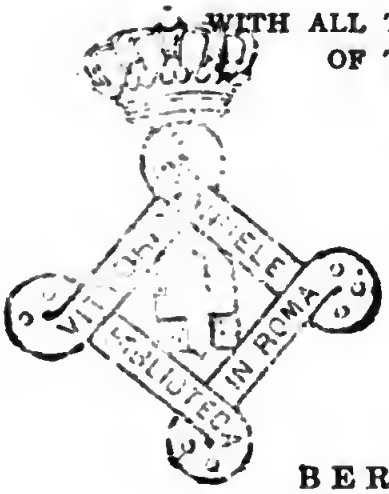
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OF THE THIRD LONDON EDITION.

VOL. I.





LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1863.

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THE SOURCES OF THE NARRATIVE.

BEFORE I had determined to write any account of the war, there were grounds from which many inferred that a task of this kind would be mine; and I may say that, from the hour of their landing on the enemy's coast, close down to the present time, men, acting under this conviction, have been giving me a good deal of their knowledge.

In 1856 Lady Raglan placed in my hands the whole mass of the papers which Lord Raglan had with him at the time of his death. Having done this, she made it her request that I would cause to be published a letter which her husband addressed to her a few days before his death.* All else she left to me. Time passed, and no history founded upon these papers was given to the world. Time still passed away; and it chanced to me to hear that people who longed for the dispersion of what

* I need hardly say that this letter will appear in its proper place, though not in any of these four volumes.

they believed to be falsehoods, were striving to impart to Lady Raglan the not unnatural impatience which all this delay had provoked. But, with a singleness of purpose and a strength of will which remind one of the great soldier who was her father's brother, she answered that, the papers having once been placed under my control, she would not disturb me with expressions of impatience, nor suffer any one else to do so with her assent. I cannot be too grateful to her for her generous and resolute trustfulness. If these volumes are late, the whole blame rests with me. If they are reaching the light too soon, the fault is still mine.

Knowing Lord Raglan's habits of business, knowing his tendency to connect all public transactions with the labours of the desk, and finding in no part of the correspondence the least semblance of anything like a chasm, I am led to believe that, of almost everything concerning the business of the war which was known to Lord Raglan himself, there lies in the papers before me a clear and faithful record.

In this mass of papers there are, not only all the Military Reports which were from time to time addressed to the Commander of the English army by the generals and other officers serving under him (including their holograph narratives of the part

they had been taking in the battles), but also Lord Raglan's official and private correspondence with sovereigns and their ambassadors; with ministers, generals, and admirals; with the French, with the Turks, with the Sardinians; with public men, and official functionaries of all sorts and conditions; with adventurers; with men propounding wild schemes; with dear and faithful friends.* Circumstances had previously made me acquainted with a good deal of the more important information thus laid before me; but there is a completeness in this body of authentic records which enables me to tread with more confidence than would have been right or possible if I had had a less perfect survey of the knowledge which belonged to headquarters. And so methodical was Lord Raglan, and so well was he served by Colonel Steele, his military secretary, that all this mass of authentic matter lies ranged in perfect order. The strategic plans of the much-contriving Emperor — still carrying the odour of the havannahs which aid the ingenuity of the Tuileries — are ranged with all due care, and can be got at in a few moments; but, not less carefully ranged,

* I have never looked at it since 1856, but it struck me then, that the letter which Mr Sidney Herbert addressed to Lord Raglan in the winter of the first campaign was the very ideal of what, in such circumstances, might be written by an English statesman who dearly loved his friend, but who loved his country yet more.

and equally easy to find, is the rival scheme of the enthusiastic nosologist who advised that the Russians should be destroyed by the action of malaria, and the elaborate proposal of the English general who submitted a plan for taking Sebastopol with bows and arrows. Here and there, the neatness of the arranging hand is in strange contrast with the fiery contents of the papers arranged; for along with reports and returns, and things precise, the most hurried scrawl of the commander who writes to his chief under stress of deep emotion, lies flat, and hushed, and docketed. It would seem as though no paper addressed to the English Headquarters was ever destroyed or mislaid.

With respect to my right to make public any of the papers intrusted to me, I have this, and this only, to say: circumstances have enabled me to know who ought to be consulted before any State Paper or private letter hitherto kept secret is sent abroad into the world; and, having this knowledge, I have done what I judge to be right.

The papers intrusted to me by Lady Raglan contain a part only of the knowledge which, without any energy on my part, I was destined to have cast upon me; for when it became known that the papers of the English Headquarters were in my hands, and that I was really engaged in the task

which rumour had prematurely assigned to me, information of the highest value was poured in upon me from many quarters. Nor was this all. Great as was the quantity of information thus actually imparted to me, I found that the information which lay at my command was yet more abundant; for I do not recollect that to any one man in this country I have ever expressed any wish for the information which he might be able to give me, without receiving at once what I believe to be a full and honest disclosure of all he could tell on the subject. This facility embarrassed me; for I never could find that there was any limit to my power of getting at what was known in this country. I rarely asked a question without eliciting something which added, more or less, to my labour, and tended to cause delay.

And now I have that to state which will not surprise my own countrymen, but which still, in the eyes of the foreigner, will seem to be passing strange. For some years, our statesmen, our admirals, and our generals, have known that the whole correspondence of the English Headquarters was in my hands; and very many of them have from time to time conversed and corresponded with me on the business of the war. Yet I declare I do not remember that any one of these public men has ever said

to me that there was anything which, for the honour of our arms, or for the credit of the nation, it would be well to keep concealed. Every man has taken it for granted that what is best for the repute of England is, the truth.

I have received a most courteous, clear, and abundant answer to every inquiry which I have ventured to address to any French Commander; and, indeed, the willingness to communicate with me from that quarter was so strong, that an officer of great experience, and highly gifted with all the qualities which make an accomplished soldier, was despatched to this country with instructions to impart ample statements to me respecting some of the operations of the French army. I seize upon this occasion of acknowledging the advantage I derived from the admirably lucid statements which were furnished to me by this highly-instructed officer; and I know that those friends of mine to whom I had the honour of presenting him, will join with me in expressing the gratification which we all derived from his society.

I thought it right to apprise the authorities of the French War Department, that, if they desired it, the journals of their divisions, and any other unpublished papers in their War-Office which they might be pleased to show, would be looked over by

a gifted friend of mine, now a member of the House of Commons, who had kindly offered to undertake this task for me. The French authorities did not avail themselves of my offer; but any obscurity which might otherwise have resulted from this concealment has been effectually dispersed by the information I afterwards obtained from Russian sources.

Of all the materials on which I found my account of the battle of the Alma, hardly any have been more valuable to me than the narratives of the three Divisional Generals who there held command under Prince Mentschikoff. The gifted young Russian officer who obtained for me these deeply interesting narratives, and who kindly translated them from their Russian originals, has not only conferred upon me an important favour, but has also done that which will uplift the repute of the far-famed Russian infantry, by helping to show to Europe the true character of the conflict which it sustained on the banks of the Alma.

My knowledge respecting the battles of Balaclava and Inkerman, and the subsequent fights before Sebastopol, is still incomplete; and I shall welcome any information respecting these conflicts which men may be pleased to intrust to me. From the Russians, especially, I hope that I may receive com-

munications of this kind. Their defence of Sebastopol ranges high in the annals of warfare; and I imagine that the more the truth is known, the more it will redound to the honour of the Russian arms.

I do not in general appeal for proof to my personal observation, but I have departed from this abstinence in two or three instances where it seemed to me that I might prevent a waste of controversial energy by saying at once that the thing told had been seen or heard by myself.

With regard to the portion of the work which is founded upon unpublished documents and private information, I had intended at one time not to give the documents nor the names of my informants, nor the words they have written or spoken, but to indicate the nature of the statements on which I rely; as, for instance, to say in notes at the foot of a page, "The Raglan Papers," "Letter from an officer "engaged," "Oral statement made to me by one "who was present," and the like. But, upon reflection, I judged that I could not venture to do this. When a published authority is referred to, any want of correspondence between the assertion and the proof can be detected by a reader who takes the trouble to ascend to the originals; but I do not like to assert that a document or a personal narrative

withheld (for the present) from this wholesome scrutiny is the designated, yet hidden foundation of a statement which I make freely, in my own way, and in my own language. So, although when I found my statements upon a Parliamentary Paper or a published book, I commonly give my authority; yet so far as concerns that part of the work which is based upon unpublished writings or private information — and this applies to an important part of the first and second, and to nearly the whole of the third and fourth volume — I in general make no reference to the grounds on which I rely. Hereafter it may be otherwise; but, for the present, this portion of the book must rest upon what, after all, is the chief basis of our historical knowledge — must rest upon the statement of one who had good means of knowing the truth. In the meanwhile, I shall keep and leave ready the clue by which, in some later time, and without further aid from me, my statements may be traced to their sources.

For a period of now several years my knowledge of what I undertake to narrate has been growing more and more complete. Far from gathering assurance at the sight of the progress thus made, I am rather led to infer that approaches which continued so long might continue perhaps still longer; and it is not without a kind of reluctance that I

pass from the tranquil state of one who is absorbing the truth, to that of a man who at last stands up and declares it. But the time has now come.

A. W. KINGLAKE.

12 St James's Place, London,
1st January 1863.

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INVASION OF THE CRIMEA.

CHAPTER I.

In the middle of this century the peninsula which divides the Euxine from the Sea of Azoff was an almost forgotten land, lying out of the chief paths of merchants and travellers, and far away from all the capital cities of Christendom. Rarely any one went thither from Paris, or Vienna, or Berlin: to reach it from London was a harder task than to cross the Atlantic; and a man of office receiving in this distant province his orders despatched from St Petersburg, was the servant of masters who governed him from a distance of a thousand miles.

Along the course of the little rivers which seamed the ground, there were villages and narrow belts of tilled land, with gardens, and fruitful vineyards; but for the most part the Chersonese was a wilderness of steppe or of mountain range much clothed towards the west with tall stiff grasses, and the stems of a fragrant herb like southernwood. The bulk of the people were of Tartar descent, but they were no

CHAP. I.

longer in the days when nations trembled at the coming of the Golden Horde; and though they were of the Moslem faith, their religion had lost its war-like fire. Blessed with a dispensation from military service, and far away from the accustomed battle-fields of Europe and Asia, they lived in quiet, knowing little of war, except what tradition could faintly carry down from old times in low monotonous chants. In their husbandry they were more governed by the habits of their ancestors than by the nature of the land which had once fed the people of Athens, for they neglected tillage and clung to pastoral life. Watching flocks and herds, they used to remain on the knolls very still for long hours together, and when they moved, they strode over the hills in their slow-flowing robes with something of the forlorn majesty of peasants descended from warriors. They wished for no change, and they excused their content in their simple way by saying that for three generations their race had lived happy under the Czars.*

But afterwards, and for reasons unknown to the shepherds, the chief Powers of the earth began to break in upon these peaceful scenes. France, England, and Turkey were the invaders, and these at a later day were reinforced by Sardinia. With the whole might which she could put forth in a province

* The villagers of Eskel (on the Katcha) declared this to me on the 23d of September 1854, and the date gives value to the acknowledgment, for these villagers had been witnessing the confusion and seeming ruin of the Czar's army.

far removed from her military centre, Russia stood her ground. The strife lasted a year and a half, and for twelve months it raged.

And with this invasion there came something more than what men saw upon the battle-fields of the contending armies. In one of the Allied States, the people, being free of speech and having power over the judgment of their rulers, were able to take upon themselves a great share of the business of the war. It was in vain that the whole breadth of Europe divided this people from the field of strife. By means unknown before, they gained fitful and vivid glimpses of the battle and the siege, of the sufferings of the camp and bivouac, and the last dismal scenes of the hospital tent; and being thus armed from day to day with fresh knowledge, and feeling conscious of a warlike strength exceeding by a thousand fold the strength expressed by the mere numbers of their army, they thronged in, and made their voice heard, and became partakers of the counsels of State. The scene of the conflict was mainly their choice. They enforced the invasion. They watched it hour by hour. Through good and evil days they sustained it, and when by the yielding of their adversary the strife was brought to an end, they seemed to pine for more fighting. Yet they had witnessed checkered scenes. They counted their army on the mainland. They watched it over the sea. They saw it land. They followed its march. They saw it in action. They tasted of the

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joy of victory. Then came the time when they had to bear to see their army dying upon a bleak hill from cold and want. In their anguish this people strove to know their General. They had seen him in the hour of battle, and their hearts had bounded with pride. They saw him now commanding a small force of wan, feeble, dying men, yet holding a strong enemy at bay, and comporting himself as though he were the chief of a strong, besieging army. They hardly knew at the time that for forty days the fate of two armies and the lasting fame and relative strength of great nations were hanging upon the quality of one man's mind. Tormented with grief and anger for the cruel sufferings of their countrymen, they turned upon the Chief with questioning looks, and seeing him always holding his ground and always composed, they strove to break in upon the mystery of his calm. But there, their power fell short. Except by withstanding the enemy, he made them no sign, and when he was reinforced and clothed once more with power, he still seemed the same to them. At length they saw him die. Thenceforth they had to look upon the void which was left by his death. They grew more patient. They did not become less resolute. What they hoped and what they feared in all these trials, what they thought, what they felt, what they saw, what they heard, nay, even what they were planning against the enemy, they uttered aloud in the face of the world; and thence it happened that one of the

chief features of the struggle was the demeanour of a free and impetuous people in time of war.

Again, the invasion of the Crimea so tried the strength, so measured the enduring power of the nations engaged, that, when the conflict was over, their relative stations in Europe were changed, and they had to be classed afresh.

Moreover, the strife yielded lessons in war and policy which are now of great worth.

Ground for tracing the causes of the war.

But this war was deadly. It brought, they say, to the grave full a million of workmen and soldiers. It consumed a pitiless share of the wealth which man's labour had stored up as the means of life. More than this, it shattered the framework of the European system, and made it hard for any nation to be thenceforth safe except by its sheer strength. It seems right that the causes of a havoc which went to such proportions should be traced and remembered.

Europe in 1850.

For thirty-five years there had been peace between the great Powers of Europe. The outbreaks of 1848 had been put down. The wars which they kindled had been kept within bounds, and had soon been brought to an end. Kings, emperors, and statesmen declared their love of peace. But always whilst they spoke, they went on levying men. Russia, Germany, and France were laden with standing armies.

Standing armies.

Personal government.

This was one root of danger. There was another. Between a sovereign who governs for himself, and one who reigns through a council of statesmen, there

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Comparison between this system and that of governing through a Council.

are points of difference which make it more likely that war will result from the will of the one man than from the blended judgments of several chosen advisers. In these days the exigencies of an army are vast and devouring. Also, modern society growing more and more vulnerable by reason of the very beauty and complexity of its arrangements is made to tremble by the mere rumour of an appeal to arms; and, upon the whole, the evils inflicted by war are so cruel, and the benefit which a Power may hope to derive from a scheme of aggression is commonly so obscure, so remote, and so uncertain, that when the world is in a state of equilibrium and repose it is generally very hard to see how it can be really for the interest of any one State to go and do a wrong, clearly tending to provoke a rupture. Here, then, there is something like a security for the maintaining of peace. But this security rests upon the supposition that a State will faithfully pursue its own welfare, and therefore it ceases to hold good in a country where the government happens to be in such hands that the interests of the nation at large fail to coincide with the interests of its ruler. This history will not dissemble — it will broadly lay open — the truth that a people no less than a prince may be under the sway of a warlike passion, and may wring obedience to its fierce command from the gentlest ministers of state; but upon the whole, the interests, the passions, and foibles which lead to war are more likely to be found in one man than in the

band of public servants which is called a ministry. A ministry, indeed, will share in any sentiments of just national anger, and it may even entertain a great scheme of state ambition, but it can scarcely be under the sway of fanaticism, or vanity, or petulance, or bodily fear; for though any one member of the Government may have some of these defects, the danger of them will always be neutralised in council. Then again, a man rightly called a minister of state is not a mere favourite of his sovereign, but the actual transactor of public business. He is in close intercourse with those labourers of high worth and ability who in all great States compose the permanent staff of the public office, and in this way, even though he be newly come to affairs, he is brought into acquaintance with the great traditions of the State, and comes to know and feel what the interests of his country are. Above all, a ministry really charged with affairs will be free from the personal and family motives which deflect the state policy of a prince who is his own minister, and will refuse to merge the interests of their country in the mere hopes and fears of one man. CHAP. I.

On the other hand, a monarch governing for himself, and without responsible ministers, must always be under a set of motives which are laid upon him by his personal station as well as by his care for the people. Such a prince is either a hereditary sovereign or he is a man who has won the crown with his own hand. In the first case, the contingency

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of his turning out to be a man really qualified for the actual governance of an empire is almost, though not quite, excluded by the bare law of chances; and on the other hand it may be expected that a prince who has made his own way to the throne will not be wanting in such qualities of mind as fit a man for business of state. In some respects, perhaps, he will be abler than a council. He will be more daring, more resolute, more secret; but these are qualities conducive to war and not to peace. Moreover, a prince who has won for himself a sovereignty claimed by others will almost always be under the pressure of motives very foreign to the real interests of the State. He knows that by many he is regarded as a mere usurper, and that his home enemies are carefully seeking the moment when they may depose him, and throw him into prison, and ill-use him, and take his life. He commands great armies, and has a crowd of hired courtiers at his side; but he knows that if his skill and his fortune should both chance to fail him in the same hour, he would become a prisoner or a corpse. He hears, from behind, the stealthy foot of the assassin; and before him he sees the dismal gates of a jail, and the slow, hateful forms of death by the hand of the law. Of course he must and he will use all the powers of the State as a defence against these dangers, and if it chance to seem likely — as in such circumstances it often does — that war may give him safety or respite, then to war he will surely go; and although he knows that this rough expedient is one which

must be hurtful to the State, he will hardly be kept back by such a thought, for, being, as it were, a drowning man who sees a plank within his reach, he is forced by the law of nature to clutch it; and his country is then drawn into war, not because her interests require it, nor even because her interests are mistaken by her ruler, but because she has suffered herself to fall into the hands of a prince whose road to welfare is distinct from her own.

Personal government in Russia.

The power of All the Russias was centred in the Emperor, and it chanced that the qualities of Nicholas were of such a kind as to enable him to give a literal truth to the theory that he, and he alone, was the State.

In Austria.

In Austria the disasters of 1848 had broken the custom of government, and placed a kind of dictatorship in the hands of the youthful Emperor. And although before the summer of 1853 the traditions of the State had regained a great deal of their force, still for a time the recovery was not so plainly evidenced as to compel an unwilling man to see it; and the notion that the great empire of the Danube had merged in the mere wishes of Francis Joseph lingered always in the mind of the Czar and drew him on into danger.

In Prussia.

Even in Prussia, though the country seemed to enjoy a constitutional form of government, the policy of the State was always liable to be deranged by the tremulous hand of the King; and the anticipation of finding weakness in this quarter was one of

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the causes which led the Czar to defy the judgment of Europe.

Administration of foreign affairs under the Sultan.

In the Ottoman dominions Abdul Medjid was accustomed to leave the administration of foreign affairs to responsible ministers; and it will be seen that this wholesome method of reigning gave the Turkish Government a great advantage over the diplomacy of other Continental States.

Constitutional system of England in its bearing upon the conduct of Foreign Affairs.

In England there was no evil trace of that Oriental polity which yields up the power of the State into the hands of one human being. Happy in the love of the people who surrounded her throne, and free from all motives clashing with the welfare of her realms, the Queen always intrusted the business of the monarchy to ministers of state enjoying the confidence of Parliament; and upon the whole, the polity of the English state was such that no Government could draw the country into a needless war unless its error came to be shared by the bulk of the people. Indeed, the power of the Crown in England is so far from being a source of disturbance, that it is one of the safeguards of peace. There are circumstances in which an ancient reigning House gains a view of foreign affairs more tranquil and in some respects more commanding than any obtained by a Cabinet; and although it is known that in these days ministerial responsibility can never be evaded by alleging the order of the Crown, the practice of the Constitution requires that the Foreign Secretary shall have the actual sanction of his Sovereign for

every important step which he takes; and it requires also that, in order to the obtaining of this sanction, the explanations tendered to the Crown by the ministry shall be complete and frank.* The duty of rendering these explanations, and of asking for the Royal sanction, can scarcely be fulfilled without giving a minister the advantage of seeing a question from a new point of view. Therefore, although the responsible Secretary for Foreign Affairs can never find shelter by setting up the overruling will of his Sovereign as the justification of his conduct and although he must needs be supported by the advice or assent of Parliament, still he is not without means of guidance from sources of a less changeful kind; for whilst he has below him the tradition of the office, there is above him the tradition of the monarchy. By these means some steadfastness of purpose is generally, though not always, insured; and, except when it happens that the people are turned aside for a moment by some honest sentiment or moved by their innate desire to hear of insurrections and battles, the foreigner has good grounds for inferring that, whatever the policy of England may be, it will not be altogether unstable. Certainly the transactions of the East so drew England away from her landmarks as to bring her at last into war, and this, too, at a time when the Queen was still blessed with the counsels of a husband, who was a

* The existing practice of the Constitution in this respect is laid down in the debates which began the Session of 1853.

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wise and a gifted statesman; but it will be seen by-and-by how it came to happen that the forces of the Constitution were baffled.

And of France, down to the 2d of December 1851.

France, down to the winter of 1851, was under parliamentary government, and although, as will be seen, the President was able to take steps which tended to generate troubles, the country was safe from the calamity of a wanton rupture with friendly States. The change wrought in the night of the 2d of December * will be shown by-and-by, and its effects upon the peace of Europe will be traced; but the period now spoken of is the middle of the century; and at that time, and so long as the Republic maintained a real existence, it was not possible in France, any more than in England, that a war should be undertaken by the Executive Government without the approval of Parliament and of the nation at large.

Power of Russia.

It was believed that the Emperor Nicholas numbered almost a million of men under arms; and of these a main part were brave, steady, obedient soldiers. Gathering from time to time great bodies of troops upon his western frontier, he caused the minds of men in the neighbouring states to be weighed down with a sense of his strength. Moreover, he was served by a diplomacy of the busy sort, always labouring to make the world hear of Russia and to acknowledge her might; and being

* 1851.

united by family ties with some of the reigning Houses of Germany, he was able to have it believed that his favour might be of use to the courtiers and even sometimes to the statesmen of Central Europe. Down to the giving of trinkets and ribbons, he was not forgetful. His power was great; and when the troubles of 1848 broke out, the broad foundation of his authority was more than ever manifested; for surrounded by sixty millions of subjects whose loyalty was hardly short of worship, he seemed to stand free and aloof from the panic which was overturning the thrones of the Western Continent, and to look down upon the terrors of his fellow-sovereigns, not deigning to yield his cold patronage to the cause of law and order. In the West, he said, and even in Central Europe, the storm might rage as it liked, but he warned and commanded that the waves should not so much as cast their spray upon the frontiers of "Holy Russia;"* and when Hungary rose, he ordered his columns to pass the border, and forced the insurgent army to lay down its arms. Then, proudly abstaining from conditions and recompense, he yielded up the kingdom to his Ally. That day Russia seemed to touch the pinnacle of her greatness, for men were forced to acknowledge that her power was vast, and that it was wielded in a spirit of austere virtue, ranging high above common ambition.

* See the Manifesto issued by the Czar in 1848.

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But towards the South, Russia was the neighbour of Turkey. The descendants of the Ottoman invaders still remained quartered in Roumelia and the adjoining provinces. They were a race living apart from the Christians who mainly peopled the land; for the original scheme of the Moslem invasions still kept its mark upon the country. When the Ottoman warriors were conquering a province, they used to follow the injunction of the Prophet, and call upon such of the nations as rejected the Koran, to choose between "the tribute" and the sword; but the destiny implied by the first branch of the alternative was very different from that of a people whose country is conquered by European invaders. Instead of being made subject to all the laws of their conquerors, the people of the Christian Churches were suffered to live apart, governing themselves in their own way, furnishing no recruits to the army, and having few legal relations with the State, except as payers of tribute.

In cities, the people of the Christian Churches and of the Synagogue generally had their respective districts, apart from the Moslem quarter. They were not safe from lawless acts of tyranny; and there were usages which reminded them that they were a conquered people; but they were never interfered with, as the citizens of European States are, for the mere sake of method or uniformity. They were free in the exercise of their religion; and most of the customs under which they lived were so completely

their own, and so many of the laws which they obeyed were laws administered by themselves, that they might almost be said to form tributary republics in the midst of a military empire. Indeed, this distinct existence was so fully recognised as a result of Mahometan conquest that the Turkish Government was accustomed to give the title of a "Nation" to the members of any Christian Church or Synagogue established within the Ottoman realm.

The subjects, or "Rayahs," as they are called, thus held under Mussulman sway, numbered perhaps fifteen millions; and although the Mussulmans of the whole Empire might be computed at twenty-one millions, the great bulk of these were scattered over remote provinces in Asia and Africa. There were hardly more than two million Turks in Europe. These dominant Ottomans were in an earlier stage of civilisation than most of the Christian States; and it had happened that their Government, in straining to overtake and imitate the more cultivated nations, had broken down much of the strength which belongs to a warlike and simple people. Besides, amongst the Turks who clustered around the seat of government, a large proportion were men so spoilt by their contact with the metropolis of the Lower Empire, that, whilst the State suffered from the ignorance and simplicity of the governing race, it was suffering also in an opposite way under the evils which are bred by corruption.

Yet, notwithstanding the canker of Byzantian vice,

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and although they knew that they were liable to be baffled by the methods of high organisation and ingenious contrivance now brought to bear upon the structure of armies, the Ottoman people still upheld the warlike spirit which belongs to their race and to their faith. It is true that Russia, seizing a moment when the Sultan was without an ally,* and almost without an army,** had invaded Bulgaria in 1828, and, passing the Balkan in the following year, had brought the campaign to an issue which seemed like a triumph. Yet men versed in the affairs of Eastern Europe always knew that the Treaty of Adrianople had not been won by the real strength of the invaders, but rather by a daring stratagem in the nature of a surprise, and by a skilful feat in
1850. diplomacy. Experience showed that the Turks could generally hold their ground with obstinacy, when the conditions of a fight were of such a kind that a man's bravery could make up for the want of preparation and discipline. In truth, they were a devoted soldiery, and fired with so high a spirit that, when brought into the right frame of mind, they could look upon the thought of death in action with a steadfast, lusty joy. They were temperate, enduring, and obedient to a degree unknown in other armies.

* The accustomed policy of England had been deranged by a sentiment in favour of Greece. Moreover, Lord Aberdeen was then at the Foreign Office.

** The Sultan had destroyed the Janissaries, and was beginning the formation of an army upon the European plan.

They brought their wants within a very narrow compass; and, without much visible effort of commissariat skill or of transport power, they were generally found to be provided with bread and cartridges, and even with means of shelter. Their arms were always bright. Their faith tended to make them improvident; but a wise instinct taught them that if there was one thing which ought not to be left to fate or to the precepts of a deceased prophet, it was the Artillery. Their guns were well served. The Empire was wanting in the classes from which a large body of good officers and of able statesmen could be taken, and therefore, with all their bravery, the Turks were liable to be brought to the verge of ruin by panic in the field, or by panic in the Divan; but where the men are of so warlike a quality as the Turks, the want of able officers can be remedied to an almost incredible degree by the presence of a foreigner; and indeed the Osmanlee is so strangely cheered and supported by the mere sight of an Englishman, that aid rendered upon the spur of the moment by five or six of our countrymen has more than once changed despair into victory, and governed the course of events. Help of that sort, whatever our Government might do, was not again likely to be wanting to the Turks in a defensive war. Moreover, the vast and desolate tracts of country which lie between the Pruth and the Bosphorus cannot easily be crossed by an army requiring large supplies, especially if it should be deprived of the sea com-

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munication. It is true that neither the warlike qualities of the Ottoman people nor the physical difficulties of the invasion were well understood in Europe, and it was commonly believed that Turkey, if left unsupported, would lie completely at the mercy of the Czar. This, however, was an error. Except in the possible event of their being overwhelmed by some panic, the Turks were not liable to be speedily crushed by an army forcing the line of the Danube and advancing through the passes of the Balkan.

But also, the conquest of European Turkey was obstructed by the very splendour of the prize. To have the dominion of the summer kiosks, and the steep shady gardens looking down on the straits between Europe and Asia, is to have a command which carries with it nothing less than an Empire: and since the strength of every nation is relative, and is liable to be turned to nought by the aggrandisement of another Power, it was plain that no one among the nations of Europe could be seen going in quest of dominion on the Bosphorus without awakening alarm and resistance on the part of the other great Powers. Certainly the Turks trusted much in Heaven; but being also highly skilled in so much of the diplomatic art as was needed for them in this temporal world, they knew how to keep alive the watchfulness of every Power which was resolved to exclude its rivals from the shores of the Bosphorus. Moreover, those descendants of the

Ottoman conquerors still remained gifted with the almost inscrutable qualities which enable a chosen race to hold dominion over a people more numerous and more clever than their masters. There were a few English statesmen and several English travellers who had come to understand this; but the generality of men in the Christian countries found it hard to make out that a people could be wise without being keenly intelligent, and could see little strength in a civilisation much earlier and more rude than their own.

So in the common judgment of the world it had long seemed natural that, as a result of the decay which was thought to have come upon the Ottoman Empire, its European provinces should revert to Christendom. By many the conquest of them was thought to be an easy task: for the Turks were few and simple, and in peace-time very listless and improvident; and the bulk of the people held under their sway in Europe were Christians, who bore hatred against their Ottoman masters. And to Russia these same provinces seemed to be of a worth beyond all kind of measurement, for they lay towards the warm South, and commanding the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, gave access to and fro between the Euxine and the Mediterranean. The Power which seemed to be abounding in might was divided from the land of temptation by a mere stream of water. No treaty stood in the way.*

* The preambles of the Treaties of 1840 and 1841 recognised the

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Was there in the polity of Europe any principle, custom, or law which could shelter the weak from the strong, and forbid the lord of eight hundred thousand soldiers from crossing the Pruth or the Danube?

expediency of maintaining the Sultan's dominion, but there was nothing in the articles of either of those treaties which engaged the contracting parties to defend the empire from foreign invasion.

CHAPTER II.

CHAP. II.

The Usage which tends to protect the weak against the strong.

THE supreme Law or Usage which forms the safeguard of Europe is not in a state so perfect and symmetrical that the elucidation of it will bring any ease or comfort to a mind accustomed to crave for well-defined rules of conduct. It is a rough and wild-grown system, and its observance can only be enforced by opinion, and by the belief that it truly coincides with the interests of every Power which is called upon to obey it; but practically, it has been made to achieve a fair portion of that security which sanguine men might hope to see resulting from the adoption of an international code. Perhaps under a system ideally formed for the safety of nations and for the peace of the world, a wrong done to one State would be instantly treated as a wrong done to all. But in the actual state of the world there is no such bond between nations. It is true that the law of nations does not stint the right of executing justice, and that any Power may either remonstrate against a wrong done to another State great or small, or may endeavour, if so it chooses, to prevent or redress the wrong by force of arms; but the duties of States in this respect are very far

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from being co-extensive with their rights. In Europe, all States except the five great Powers are exempt from the duty of watching over the general safety; and even a State which is one of the five great Powers is not practically under an obligation to sustain the cause of justice unless its perception of the wrong is re-inforced by a sense of its own interests. Moreover, no State, unless it be combating for its very life, can be expected to engage in a war without a fair prospect of success. But when the three circumstances are present — when a wrong is being done against any State great or small, when that wrong in its present or ulterior consequences happens to be injurious to one of the five great Powers, and, finally, when the great Power so injured is competent to wage war with fair hopes — then Europe is accustomed to expect that the great Power which is sustaining the hurt will be enlivened by the smart of the wound, and for its own sake, as well as for the public weal, will be ready to come forward in arms, or to labour for the formation of such leagues as may be needed for upholding the cause of justice. If a Power fails in this duty to itself and to Europe, it suddenly becomes lowered in the opinion of mankind; and happily there is no historic lesson more true than that which teaches all rulers that a moral degradation of this sort is speedily followed by disasters of such a kind as to be capable of being expressed in arithmetic, and of being in that way made clear to even

the narrowest understanding. The principle on which the safeguard rests will not be acknowledged by all, but those who will disown it can be designated beforehand. There are many who cannot make out how society can justly be harsh upon a man for being tame under insult or injury; and the same class of moralists will encounter a like difficulty in their endeavour to understand the cogency and the worth of this Usage.

Instance of a wrong to which the Usage did not apply.

Perhaps the limit to which the Usage is subject may be best shown by first giving an example of circumstances in which it fails to take practical effect. When the Republic of Cracow was abolished by an arrangement concerted between Russia and Austria, a clear wrong was done, and France and England protested against it; but it could hardly be said that their interests were grievously affected by the change, and therefore it was not the opinion of Europe that the Western Powers had been guilty of a great dereliction of duty because on this account they declined to go to war.

Instance in which the Usage was applicable and was disobeyed.

But as an example of circumstances in which tame acquiescence would be clearly a breach of the great Usage and a defection from the cause of nations, one may cite the conduct of Prussia in 1805; for when the First Napoleon suddenly came to a rupture with Austria, and broke up from his camp at Boulogne and poured his armies into Germany, advancing upon Ulm and finally upon Vienna itself, all men saw that it was not only for the

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interest of Europe at large, but also for the interest of Prussia herself, that she should come forward to prevent the catastrophe. She hung back and stood still whilst Austria succumbed; but acting thus, Prussia incurred the ill opinion of Europe; and the ruin which follows degradation did not at all lag, for in the very next year Bonaparte was issuing his decrees from Berlin, and the Prussians were yielding up their provinces and their strong places to France, and handing over their stores of gold and silver, and of food and clothing, to cruel French intendants, and French soldiery were quartered upon them at their hearths. A brave and warlike people had been brought down into this abyss because their rulers had shrunk from taking up arms in obedience to the great Usage; and Europe set it down and remembered that Prussia's dereliction of duty in 1805 was followed by shame and ruin in the autumn of 1806.

Instances in which the Usage was faithfully obeyed.

But if the wars of 1805 and 1806 supplied a signal instance of this kind of defection and of its speedy chastisement, they also furnished examples of loyal obedience to the great Usage. From the rupture of the peace of Amiens to the summer of 1805, Bonaparte was at peace with the Continent and at war with this country. During that interval of more than two years he bent his whole energy, and devoted the vast resources at his command, to the one object of invading and crushing England. It was against the interest of Europe that England should be ruined, but more especially it was for the

interest of Austria that this disaster should be averted, because the great empire of the Danube is so situate that its interests are more closely identical with the interests of England than with those of any other Power. Moreover, the indignation of Austria was whetted by seeing Bonaparte crowning himself at Milan and seizing Genoa. Therefore when Pitt turned to the Court of Vienna, he did not turn in vain. Supported by Russia and Sweden, Austria came forward in arms, and though she was for the time broken down by the disaster of Ulm, and the defeat of the Russian army at Austerlitz, her old ally was safe: nothing more was heard in those days of the invasion of England; and the islanders, relieved from the duty of mere literal self-defence, were set free to enter upon a larger scheme of action.* Thenceforth they defended England by toiling for the deliverance of Europe. The coalition of 1805 was shattered, but before it perished it had helped to secure the precious life of the nation which was destined to be the first to carry war into the territory of the disturber.

By Austria.

Again, in the same year it was perilous to Central Europe that Bonaparte should be having dominion in Germany; but also it was against the interest of

By Russia.

* Of course it was the destruction of the French and Spanish fleets at Trafalgar which prevented Bonaparte from resuming the idea of invading England, but that which caused him to abandon the enterprise which he had been planning for two years was the coalition. He broke up from the camp of Boulogne several weeks before the battle of Trafalgar.

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Russia that this should be, and the defection of Prussia threw upon the Czar the burden of having to be foremost in the defence of Austria. Therefore, in 1805, the Emperor Alexander came forward with his army to the rescue, and in the following year he refused to stand idle when Prussia was the victim, and again moved forward his armies; and although he was worsted at Austerlitz in striving to defend Austria, and although, after heroic struggles in defence of Prussia, he at last was vanquished at Friedland and was obliged to make peace, still his faithful and valorous efforts gained him so much of the respect of Europe, and even of his victorious adversary, that, beaten as he was, he was able to go to Tilsit and to negotiate with the great Conqueror of the day upon a footing which resembled equality.

By England.

It has fallen to the lot of England also to have some share of the honour which Europe bestows upon resolute defenders of right; for when Bonaparte wished to make himself master of Spain and Portugal, it was the interest of England to prevent this result if she could, and to endeavour to thwart and humble the French Emperor in the midst of his triumphs; but it was also for the interest of Europe that England should be able to do this. Nay, so crushing had been the disasters suffered by the Continental States that the glorious duty of standing foremost and alone in defence of the liberties of mankind was cast for a time upon England. The task

might well seem a hard one for all that the islanders could do was to send out in ships scanty bodies of troops, in order that the men, when they landed, might encounter the armies of the hitherto victorious Emperor. But England did not shrink from the undertaking. For more than six years she carried on the struggle, and during some three years of that time she stood alone against Napoleon, for he had put down all the other nations which had sought to resist him, and during that evil time it seemed that the vanquished people of the Continent had no hope left except when they were telling one another in whispers that England remained mistress of the seas, and in the Peninsula was still fighting hard. Times grew better, and although Bonaparte still held the language of a great potentate, he had so mismanaged the resources of the heroic and warlike country which he ruled, that an English army with its Portuguese auxiliaries was able to invade and hold his territory; and whilst he still pretended to the Germans that he was a proud and powerful sovereign, Wellington unmasked the whole imposture of the "French Empire" by establishing his army and his fox-hounds in the south of France, and quietly hunting the country in the livery of the Salisbury hunt.*

* Larpent's "Private Journal at Head-Quarters," vol. ii. p. 105. Wellington established himself in France in November 1813. He sent back into the Peninsula his whole Spanish army because it plundered. The invasion of France by the Continental Powers took place in the beginning of the following year.

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The effort had begun when Sir Arthur Wellesley landed upon the coast of Portugal in the year 1808, and it ended in 1814. In the spring of that last year, men of several nations were gathered together at the English headquarters in Toulouse; and it was put into the heart of a man whose name is unknown, but who spoke in the French tongue, to confer the loftiest title that ever was truthfully given to man. In a moment his words were seized as though they were words from on High, and the whole assembly with one voice saluted Wellington the "Liberator "of Europe."* The loyal soldier shrank from the sound of a title not taken exact from the Gazette,** but the voice which had spoken was nothing less than the voice of grateful nations. If the fame of England had grown to this proportion, it was because she had faithfully obeyed the great Usage, and had come to be the main prop of the rights of others by firmly defending her own.

The practical working of the Usage.

The obligation imposed upon a great State by this Usage is not a heavy yoke, for after all it does no more than impel a Sovereign, by fresh motives and by larger sanctions, to be watchful in the protection of his own interests. It quickens his sense of honour. It warns him that if he tamely stands witnessing a wrong which it is his interest and his duty to re-

* Larpent's "Private Journal," vol. ii. p. 267.

** Sir George Larpent (who was present) says that Wellington "bowed confused," and abruptly put an end to the scene.

dress, he will not escape with the reckoning which awaits him in his own dishonoured country, but that he will also be held guilty of a great European defection, and that his delinquency will be punished by the reproach of nations, by their scorn and mistrust, and at last, perhaps, by their desertion of him in his hour of trial. But, on the other hand, the Usage assures a Prince that if he will but be firm in coming forward to redress a public wrong which chances to be collaterally hurtful to his own State, his cause will be singularly ennobled and strengthened by the acknowledgment of the principle that, although he is fighting for his own people, he is fighting also for every nation in the world which is interested in putting down the wrong-doer.

Of course neither this nor any other human law or usage can have any real worth except in proportion to the respect and obedience with which it is regarded; but since the Usage exacts nothing from any State except what is really for its own good as well as for the general weal, it is very much obeyed, and is always respected in Europe. Indeed a virtual compliance with the Usage is much more general than it might seem to be at first sight, for the known or foreseen determination of a great State to resist the perpetration of a wrong is constantly tending with great force to the maintenance of peace, and peace being much less remarkable than war, the very success with which the principle works prevents it from being conspicuous. And, certainly,

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when the Usage is faithfully obeyed, it is a strong safeguard, for the interests of different States being much intertwined, it commonly happens that a wrong done to a lesser State is in some way hurtful or dishonouring to one or other of the great Powers; and if the great Power which is thus aggrieved takes fire, as it ought to do, and determines to resist or avenge, it is generally able to embroil other States; and the result is that the Prince who is the wrong-doer finds himself involved in a war which — having a tendency to become greater and greater — can hardly be otherwise than formidable to him. It is the apprehension of this result which is the main safeguard of peace. Any prince who might be inclined to do a wrong to another State casts his eyes abroad to see the condition of the great Powers. If he observes that they are all in a sound state, and headed by firm, able rulers, who are equal, if need be, to the duty of taking up arms, he knows that his contemplated outrage would produce a war of which he cannot foresee the scope or limit, and, unless he be a madman or a desperado desiring war for war's sake, he will be inclined to hold back. On the other hand, if he sees that any great nation which ought to be foremost to resist him is in a state of exceptional weakness, or under the governance of unworthy or incapable rulers, or is distracted by some whim or sentiment interfering with her accustomed policy, then, perhaps, he allows himself to entertain a hope that she may not have the spirit or the wisdom to

perform her duty. That is the hope, and it may be said in these days it is the one only hope, which would drive a sane prince to become the disturber of Europe. To frustrate this hope — in other words, to keep alive the dread of a just and avenging war — should be the care of every statesman who would faithfully labour to preserve the peace of Europe. It is a poor use of time to urge a king or an emperor to restrain his ambition and his covetousness, for these are passions eternal, always to be looked for, and always to be combated. For such a prince the only good bridle is the fear of war. Of course it is right enough to appeal to this wholesome fear under the courteous title of "deference to opinion," though in truth it is not for the ambitious disturber, but rather for those Princes who are showing signs of weakness and failing spirit, that the discipline of opinion is really needed. Happily this discipline is not often wanting, for the feelings of nations in regard to the toleration of a wrong coincide with the general weal; and if men cannot always shame a prince from being guilty of an ignominious defection, they at least take care that the fruit of his delinquency shall be bitter. Europe is severe and slow of forgiveness towards any great Power which, by shrinking from the defence of its own rights, has suffered a harm to be done to another State.

It will be seen by-and-by that, in defiance of the opinion of Europe, and without any colour of right, a great Power invaded the territory of a weaker neigh-

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bour; but any one who keeps in mind the principle of the great Usage will have the means of seeing what resources Europe had for repressing this act of violence, and will hold a clue for finding out the quarter to which men had a right to look for the commencement of resistance.

Aspect of Europe in reference to the Turkish Empire.

Policy of Austria.

The Power most exposed to harm from Russian encroachments upon European Turkey was Austria; for it was plain that, if her great neighbour of the North were to extend his empire in the direction of Moldavia, Wallachia, and Servia, and so come winding round her South-Eastern frontier, she would be brought into grievous danger; and her motives for watchfulness in this quarter were quickened by a knowledge of the disturbing elements which existed in the border provinces, where the people were drawn towards Russia by the ties of religion and race, and even of language. If the prospect of the Czar's carrying his dominion to the shores of the Bosphorus was galling and offensive to the other Powers of Europe, the evil which such a change was calculated to bring upon Austria seemed hardly short of ruin. Moreover Austria, in her character as a representative of German interests, was charged to see that the Lower Danube, ordained by Nature to be the main outlet for the products of Central Europe, should not hopelessly fall under the control of the Northern Power. Thus upon Austria, before all other Powers, there attached the care of guarding against encroachments on the European provinces of the Sultan, and

the cogency of this duty towards herself, towards Germany, and towards Europe, Austria has always acknowledged. When Turkey was invaded in 1828, Prince Metternich was the one statesman in Europe who strove to form a league for the defence of the Sultan; and it will be seen that, although the events of 1849 had tended to embarrass the free action of the Emperor Francis Joseph, the last war against the Sultan disclosed no change in Austrian policy.

Of Prussia.

Over the councils of Prussia at this time the Court of St Petersburg had a dangerous ascendancy; but by his actual station as a leading member of the Confederation, and by his hopes of attaining to a still higher authority in Germany, the King was forced into accord with Austria upon all questions which touched the freedom of the Lower Danube, and it was certain that he would do all that he safely could to discourage schemes for the disturbance of the Ottoman Empire. Still he lived in awe of the Emperor Nicholas, and it was hard to say beforehand what course he would take if he should be called upon to choose between defection and war.

Of France.

Among the very foremost of the great Powers of Europe was France; and she was well entitled, if her rulers should so think fit, to use her strength against any potentate threatening to alter the great territorial arrangements of Europe; and especially it was her right to withstand any changes which she might regard as menacing to her power in the Mediterranean. But French statesmen have gene-

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rally thought that, as the Mediterranean after all is only a part of the ocean, a new maritime Power in the Levant might be rather a convenient ally against England than a dangerous rival to France; and, upon the whole, it was difficult to make out, either from the nature of things or from the general course of her policy, that France had any deep interest in the integrity of the Sultan's dominions. At all events her interest was not of so cogent a sort as to oblige her to stand more forward than any of the other great Powers, or to bear, in any greater proportion than they might do, the charge of keeping the Ottoman Empire untouched. Indeed it was hard at that time to infer from the past acts of France that she had any settled policy upon the Eastern Question. She had clung with some steadiness to the idea of establishing French influence in Syria; and from time to time during the last half-century she had been inclined to entangle herself in Egypt; but upon the question whether the elements constituting the Ottoman Empire should be kept together, she had generally seemed to be undecided; for although she took part in the conservative arrangements of 1841, her conduct in the previous year, and at several other times of crisis, had disclosed no great reluctance on her part to see the empire dismembered. Upon the supposition, however, that she intended to pursue the policy which she afterwards avowed, and to concur in the endeavour to maintain the Sultan's dominions, her duty

towards herself and to Europe required that she should herself refrain from disturbing the quiet of the East; and that in the event of any wrongful aggression by Russia upon the dominions of the Sultan, she should loyally range herself with such of the four great Powers as might be willing to check the encroachment by their authority, or, in last resort, by force of arms; but it was not at all incumbent upon France to place herself in the van; and it was not consistent with the welfare of her people that she should take upon herself a share of the European burthen disproportionate to her interest in the state of Eastern Europe. Nor was there at this time any reason to imagine that the country could be brought into strife, or engaged in warlike enterprises, without sufficient cause; for the institutions of France had not then shrivelled up into a system which subordinated the vast interests of the State to the mere safety and welfare of its ruler. The legislative power and the control of the supplies were in the hands of an Assembly freely elected; and both in the Chamber and in print men enjoyed the right of free speech. Also the executive power rested lawfully in the hands of ministers responsible to Parliament; and therefore, although the President, as will be seen, could do acts leading to mischief and danger, he could not bring France to a rupture with a foreign State unless war were really demanded by the interests or by the honour, or at least by the passions,

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of the country. And the people being peacefully inclined, and the interests and the honour of the country being carefully respected by all foreign States, France was not at that time a source of disturbance to Europe.

Of England.

Next to Austria, England was of all the great Powers the one most accustomed to insist upon the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire. It might be a complex task to prove that the rule of the English in Hindostan is connected with the stability of the Sultan's dominions in a far distant region of the world; but whether the theory of this curious inter-dependence be sound or merely fanciful, it is certain that the conquest of the shores of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles by one of the great Continental Powers would straiten the range of England's authority in the world, and, even if it did not do her harm of a positive kind, would relatively lessen her strength. The effect, too, of Russia's becoming a Mediterranean Power could not be so clearly foreseen and computed as not to be a fitting subject of care to English statesmen. The people at large were not accustomed to turn their minds in this direction; but the "Eastern Question," as it was called, had become consecrated by its descent through a great lineage of Statesmen; and the traditions of the Foreign Office were reinforced by English travellers: for these men, going to Eastern countries in early life, and becoming charmed with their

glimpse of the grand, simple, violent world that they had read of in their Bibles, used soon to grow interested in the diplomatic strife always going on at Constantinople; and then coming home, they brought back with their chibouques and their scymitars a zeal for the cause of Turkey which did not fail to find utterance in Parliament. In process of time the accumulated counsels of these travellers, coming in aid of diplomatists and statesmen, put straight the deflection which had been caused by a romantic sympathy whith the Greek insurgents; and it may be said that after the year 1833 the Eastern policy of England was brought back into its ancient channel.

Abroad no one doubted that the maintenance of the Sultan's authority at Constantinople was of high concern to England; and indeed the bearing of the Eastern question upon English interests seemed even more clear and obvious to foreigners than to the bulk of our countrymen at home. At this time Lord John Russell was the Prime Minister; and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was Lord Palmerston. It is true that during the last Russian invasion of Turkey in 1828, Lord Palmerston, then out of office, had taken part with Russia; but from the period of the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi in 1833 he had not swerved from the traditions of the Foreign Office; and upon the whole there was no fair ground for believing that under his counsels,

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and under the sanction of the then Prime Minister, Lord Aberdeen's acquiescent policy of 1829 would again be followed by England. It is true that strange doctrines were afloat; but after 1833 the Government had not forgotten that England was one of the great Powers of Europe, and had never confessed, by any unpardonable inaction, that this height and standing in the world gave their country mere rank and celebrity without corresponding duties. Upon the whole, there was not at this time any sound reason for doubting that England would pursue her accustomed policy with due resolution. Thus Europe was in repose; for, in general, when the world believes that England will be firm, there is peace; it is the hope of her proving weak or irresolute which tends to breed war.

Of the lesser States of Europe.

Of the lesser States of Europe there were some which, in the event of a war, might lean towards Russia, and more which would lean against her: and the divided opinion of the minor Courts of Germany might be reckoned upon by the Czar as tending to hamper the action of the leading States; but, upon the whole, the interests of the lesser Powers of Europe, and the means of action at their command, were not of such a kind as to exert much weight in retarding or accelerating Russian schemes of encroachment upon Turkey.

This was the quiet aspect of Europe in relation to the Eastern question when an ancient quarrel be-

tween the monks of the Greek and the Latin Churches in Palestine began to extend to laymen and politicians, and even at last to endanger the peace of the world.

CHAPTER III.

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Holy shrines.

THE mystery of holy shrines lies deep in human nature. For, however the more spiritual minds may be able to rise and soar, the common man during his mortal career is tethered to the globe that is his appointed dwelling-place; and the more his affections are pure and holy, the more they seem to blend with the outward and visible world. Poets, bringing the gifts of mind to bear upon human feelings, have surrounded the image of love with myriads of their dazzling fancies; but it has been said that in every country, when a peasant speaks of his deep love, he always says the same thing. He always utters the dear name, and then only says that he "worships "the ground she treads." It seems that where she who holds the spell of his life once touched the earth — where the hills and the wooded glen and the pebbly banks of the stream have in them the enchanting quality that they were seen by him and by her when they were together — there always his memory will cling; and it is in vain that space intervenes, for imagination, transcendant and strong of flight, can waft him from lands far away till he lights upon the very path by the river's bank which was blessed

by her gracious step. Nay, distance will inflame his fancy, for if he be cut off from the sacred ground by the breadth of the ocean, or by vast, endless desolate tracts, he comes to know that deep in his bosom there lies a secret desire to journey and journey far, that he may touch with fond lips some mere ledge of rock where once he saw her foot resting. It seems that the impulse does not spring from any designed culture of sentiment, but from an honest earthly passion vouchsafed to the unlettered and the simple-hearted, and giving them strength to pass the mystic border which lies between love and worship. For men strongly moved by the Christian faith it was natural to yearn after the scenes of the Gospel narrative. In old times this feeling had strength to impel the chivalry of Europe to undertake the conquest of a barren and distant land; and although in later days the aggregate faith of the nations grew chill, and Christendom no longer claimed with the sword, still there were always many who were willing to brave toil and danger for the sake of attaining to the actual and visible Sion. These venturesome men came to be called Pelerins or Pilgrims. At first, as it would seem, they were impelled by deep feeling acting upon bold and resolute natures. Holding close to the faith that the Son of God, being also in mystic sense the great God himself, had for our sakes and for our salvation become a babe, growing up to be an anxious and suffering man, and submitting to be cruelly tortured and killed by the

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hands of His own creatures, they longed to touch and to kiss the spots which were believed to be the silent witnesses of His life upon earth, and of His cross and passion. And since also these men were of the Churches which sanctioned the adoration of the Virgin, they were taught, alike by their conception of duty and by nature's low whispering voice, to touch and to kiss the holy ground where Mary, pure and young, was ordained to become the link between God and the race of fallen man. And because the rocky land abounded in recesses and caves yielding shelter against sun and rain, it was possible for the Churches to declare, and very easy for trustful men to believe, that a hollow in a rock at Bethlehem was the Manger which held the infant Redeemer, and that a Grotto at Nazareth was the very home of the blessed Virgin.

Priests fastened upon this sentiment, and although in its beginning their design was not sordid, they found themselves driven by the course of events to convert the alluring mystery of the Holy Places into a source of revenue. The Mahometan invaders had become by conquest the lords of the ground; but since their own creed laid great stress upon the virtue of pilgrimage to holy shrines, they willingly entered into the feeling of the Christians who came to kneel in Palestine. Moreover, they respected the self-denial of monks; and it was found that, even in turbulent times, a convent in Palestine surrounded by a good wall, and headed by a clever Superior,

could generally hold its own. It was to establishments of this kind that the pilgrim looked for aid and hospitality, and in order to keep them up the priests imagined the plan of causing the votary to pay according to his means at every shrine which he embraced. Upon the understanding that he fulfilled that condition he was led to believe that he won for himself unspeakable privileges in the world to come; and thenceforth a pilgrimage to the holy shrines ceased to be an expression of enthusiastic sentiment, and became a common act of devotion.

But since it happened that because of the manner in which the toll was levied, every one of the Holy Places was a distinct source of revenue, the prerogative of the Turks as owners of the ground was necessarily brought into play, and it rested with them to determine which of the rival Churches should have the control and usufruct of every holy shrine. Here, then, was a subject of lasting strife. So long as the Ottoman Empire was in its full strength, the authorities at Constantinople were governed in their decisions by the common appliances of intrigue, and most chiefly, no doubt, by gold; but when the power of the Sultans so waned as to make it needful for them to contract engagements with Christian sovereigns, the monks of one or other of the Churches found means to get their suit upheld by foreign intervention. In 1740, France obtained from the Sultan a grant which had the force of a treaty, and

Contest for the possession of the shrines.

Patronage of Foreign Powers.

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its Articles, or "Capitulations," as they were sometimes called, purported to confirm and enlarge all the then existing privileges of the Latin Church in Palestine. But this success was not closely pursued, for in the course of the succeeding hundred years, the Greeks, keenly supported by Russia, obtained from the Turkish Government several firmans which granted them advantages in derogation of the treaty with France; and until the middle of this century France acquiesced.

Comparison between the claims of Russia and France.

In the contest now about to be raised between France and Russia, it would be wrong to suppose that, so far as concerned strength of motive and sincerity of purpose, there was any approach to an equality between the contending Governments. In the Greek Church the rite of pilgrimage is held to be of such deep import, that if a family can command the means of journeying to Palestine, even from the far distant provinces of Russia, they can scarcely remain in the sensation of being truly devout without undertaking the holy enterprise; and to this end the fruits of parsimony and labour, enduring through all the best years of manhood, are joyfully devoted. The compassing of vast distances with the narrow means at the command of a peasant is not achieved without suffering so great as to destroy many lives. This danger does not deter the brave pious people of the North. As the reward of their sacrifices, their priests, speaking boldly in the name of Heaven, promise them ineffable blessings.

The advantages held out are not understood to be dependent upon the volition and motive of the pilgrim, for they hold good, as baptism does, for children of tender years. Of course every man who thus came from afar to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was the representative of many more who would do the like if they could. When the Emperor of Russia sought to gain or to keep for his Church the holy shrines of Palestine, he spoke on behalf of fifty millions of brave, pious, devoted subjects, of whom thousands for the sake of the cause would joyfully risk their lives. From the serf in his hut even up to the great Czar himself, the faith professed was the faith really glowing in the heart, and violently swaying the will. It was the part of wise statesmen to treat with much deference an honest and pious desire which was rooted thus deep in the bosom of the Russian people.

On the other hand, the Latin Church seems not to have inculcated pilgrimage so earnestly as its Eastern rival; and if it did, it obtained but slight compliance with its precept; for whilst the Greek pilgrim-ships poured out upon the landing-place of Jaffa the multitudes of those who had survived the misery and the trials of the journey, the closest likeness of a pilgrim which the Latin Church could supply was often a mere French tourist, with a journal and a theory, and a plan of writing a book. It

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was true that the French Foreign Office had from time to time followed up those claims to protect the Latin Church in the East which had arisen in the times when the mistresses of the Most Christian kings were pious; but it was understood that by the course of her studies in the eighteenth century France had obtained a tight control over her religious feelings. Whenever she put forward a claim in her character as "the eldest daughter of the Church," men treated her demand as political, and dealt with it accordingly; but as to the religious pretension on which it was based, Europe always met that with a smile. Yet it will presently be seen that a claim which tried the gravity of diplomatists might be used as a puissant engine of mischief.

Measures taken by the French President.

There was repose in the empire of the Sultan, and even the rival Churches of Jerusalem were suffering each other to rest, when the French President, in cold blood, and under no new motive for action, took up the forgotten cause of the Latin Church of Jerusalem, and began to apply it as a wedge for sundering the peace of the world.

The French Ambassador at Constantinople was instructed to demand that the grants to the Latin Church which were contained in the treaty of 1740 should be strictly executed; and since the firmans granted during the last century to the Greek Church were inconsistent with the capitulations of 1740, and had long been in actual operation, the effect of this

demand on the part of the French President was to force the Sultan to disturb the existing state of repose, to annul the privileges which (with the acquiescence of France) the Greek Church had long been enjoying, to drive into frenzy the priesthood of the Greek Church, and to rouse to indignation the Sovereign of the great military empire of the North, with all those millions of pious and devoted men who, so far as regarded this question, were heart and soul with their Czar. "The Ambassador of France," said our Foreign Secretary, "was the first to disturb "the status quo in which the matter rested. Not that "the disputes of the Latin and Greek Churches were "not very active, but that without some political "action on the part of France those quarrels would "never have troubled the relations of friendly Powers. "If report is to be believed, the French Ambassador "was the first to speak of having recourse to force, "and to threaten the intervention of a French fleet "to enforce the demands of his country. We should "deeply regret any dispute that might lead to con- "flict between two of the great Powers of Europe; "but when we reflect that the quarrel is for exclusive "privileges in a spot near which the heavenly host "proclaimed peace on earth and goodwill towards "men—when we see rival Churches contending for "mastery in the very place where Christ died for "mankind — the thought of such a spectacle is "melancholy indeed. . . Both parties ought to refrain "from putting armies and fleets in motion for the

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"purpose of making the tomb of Christ a cause of "quarrel among Christians."*

Still, in a narrow and technical point of view, the claim of France might be upheld, because it was based upon a treaty between France and the Porte which could not be legally abrogated without the consent of the French Government; and the concessions to the Greek Church, though obtained at the instance of Russia, had not been put into the form of treaty engagements, and could always be revoked at the pleasure of the Sultan. Accordingly M. de Lavalette continued to press for the strict fulfilment of the treaty; and being guided, as it would seem, by violent instructions, and being also zealous and unskilled, he soon carried his urgency to the extremity of using offensive threats, and began to speak of what should be done by the French fleet. The Russian Envoy, better versed in affairs, used wiser but hardly less cogent words, requiring that the firmans should remain in force; and since no ingenuity could reconcile the engagements of the treaty with the grants contained in the firmans, the Porte, though having no interest of its own in the question, was tortured and alarmed by the contending negotiators. It seemed almost impossible to satisfy France without affronting the Emperor Nicholas.

By the Russian Envoy.

Embarrassment of the Porte.

The French, however, did not persist in claiming up to the very letter of the treaty of 1740, and on

Mutual concessions.

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 67.

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the other hand there were some of the powers of exclusion granted by the firmans which the Greeks could be persuaded to forego; and thus the subject remaining in dispute was narrowed down until it seemed almost too slender for the apprehension of laymen.

The actual subject of dispute.

Stated in bare terms, the question was whether, for the purpose of passing through the building into their Grotto, the Latin monks should have the key of the chief door of the Church of Bethlehem, and also one of the keys of each of the two doors of the sacred manger,* and whether they should be at liberty to place in the sanctuary of the Nativity a silver star adorned with the arms of France. The Latins also claimed a privilege of worshipping once a-year at the shrine of the Blessed Mary in the Church of Gethsemane, and they went on to assert their right to have "a cupboard and a lamp in the tomb "of the Virgin;" but in this last pretension they were not well supported by France;** and, virtually, it was their claim to have a key of the great door of the Church of Bethlehem, instead of being put off with a key of the lesser door, which long remained insoluble, and had to be decided by the advance of armies*** and the threatening movement of fleets.

Diplomacy, somewhat startled at the nature of the question committed to its charge, but repressing

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 84.

** "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 48.

*** See Count Nesselrode's Despatches, ibid. p, 61.

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the coarse emotion of surprise, "ventured," as it is said, "to inquire whether in this case a key meant "an instrument for opening a door, only not to be "employed in closing that door against Christians of "other sects, or whether it was simply a key — an "emblem;"* but Diplomacy answered, that the key was really a key — a key for opening a door; and its evil quality was — not that it kept the Greeks out, but that it let the Latins come in.

Increased violence of the French Government.

After the change which was wrought in the institutions of France in the night between the 1st and the 2d of December 1851, increased violence seems to have been imparted to the instructions under which M. de Lavalette was acting, and his demand was so urgently pressed, that the Porte at length gave way, and acknowledged the validity of the Latin claims in a formal Note;** but the paper had not been signed more than a few days, when the Russian Minister, making hot remonstrance, caused the Porte to issue a firman,*** ratifying all the existing privileges of the Greeks, and virtually revoking the acknowledgment just given to the Latins. Thereupon, as was natural, the French Government became indignant, and to escape its anger the Porte promised to evade the public reading of the firman at Jerusalem;† but the Russian Minister not relaxing

* See Count Nesselrode's Despatches, ibid. p. 79.

** Note of the 9th February 1852.

*** The firman of the mi-fevrier 1852.

† Col. Rose to Lord Malmesbury. "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 46.

his zeal, the Turkish Government secretly promised him that the Pasha of Jerusalem should be instructed to try to avoid giving up the keys to the Latin monks.

Afif Bey's Mission.

Then again, under further pressure by France, the Porte engaged to evade this last evasion, and at length the duty of affecting to carry out the conflicting engagements thus made by the Porte was entrusted to Afif Bey. This calm Mahometan went to Jerusalem, and strove to temporise as well as he could betwixt the angry Churches. His great difficulty was to avert the rage which the Greeks would be likely to feel when they came to know that the firman was not to be read; and the nature of his little stratagem showed that, although he was a benighted Moslem, he had some insight into the great ruling principle of ecclesiastical questions. His plan was to inflict a bitter disappointment upon the Latins in the presence of the Greek priesthood, for he imagined that in their delight at witnessing the mortification of their rivals, the Greeks might be made to overlook the great question of the public reading of the firman. So, as soon as the ceremonial visits had been exchanged, Afif Bey, with a suite of the local Effendis, met the three Patriarchs, Greek, Latin, and Armenian, in the Church of the Resurrection, just in front of the Holy Selpulchre itself, and under the great dome, and there he "made an oration "upon the desire of His Majesty the Sultan to gratify "all classes of his subjects;" and when M. Basily and

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the Greek Patriarch and the Russian Archimandrite were becoming impatient for the public reading of the firman which was to give to their Church the whole of the Christian sanctuaries of Jerusalem, the Bey invited all the disputants to meet him in the Church of the Virgin near Gethsemane. There he read an order of the Sultan for permitting the Latins to celebrate a mass once a-year; but then, to the great joy of the Greeks, and to the horror of their rivals, he went on to read words commanding that the altar and its ornaments should remain undisturbed. "No sooner," says the official account, "were these words uttered, than the Latins, who "had come to receive their triumph over the Orientals, "broke out into loud exclamations of the impossi- "bility of celebrating mass upon a schismatic slab "of marble, with a covering of silk and gold instead "of plain linen, among schismatic vases, and before "a crucifix which has the feet separated instead of "one nailed over the other." Under cover of the storm thus raised, Afif Bey perhaps thought for a moment that he had secured his escape, and for a while he seems to have actually disentangled himself from the Churches, and to have succeeded in gaining his quarters.

But when the delight of witnessing the discomfiture of the Latins had in some degree subsided, the Greeks perceived that, after all, the main promise had been evaded. The firman had not been read. M. Basily, the Russian Consul-General, called on Afif

Bey, and required that the reading of the firman should take place. At first the Bey affected not to know what firman was meant, but afterwards he said he had no copy of it; and at length, being then at the end of his stratagems, he acknowledged that he had no instructions to read it. Thereupon M. Basily sent off Prince Garan to Jaffa to convey these tidings to Constantinople in any Arab vessel that could be found; and then, hurrying to the Pasha of Jerusalem, he demanded to have a special council assembled, with himself and the Greek Patriarch in attendance, in order that Russia and the Orthodox Church might know once for all whether the firman had been sent or not; but when the meeting was gathered, Hafiz Pasha only "made a smooth speech on the well-known "benevolence of His Majesty towards all classes of "his subjects, and that was all that could be said."* So the Greeks, though they had been soothed for a moment by the discomfiture of their Latin adversaries in the Church of the Virgin, could not any longer fail to see that their rivals were in the ascendant, and it soon turned out that the promise to evade the delivery of the keys was not to be faithfully kept.

Delivery of the key and the star.

The pressure of France was applied with increasing force, and it produced its effect. In the month of December 1852, the silver star was brought with much pomp from the coast. Some of the Moslem

* Consul Finn to Earl of Malmesbury, Oct. 27, 1852. "Correspondence," part i. p. 44.

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Effendis went down to Jaffa to escort it, and others rode out a good way on the road that they might bring it into Jerusalem with triumph; and on Wednesday the 22d of the same month, the Latin Patriarch, with joy and with a great ceremony, replaced the glittering star in the sanctuary of Bethlehem, and at the same time the key of the great door of the church, together with the keys of the sacred manger, was handed over to the Latins.*

Indignation of Russia.

For the Czar and for the devout people of All the Russias it was hard to bear this blow. "To the in-"dignation," Count Nesselrode writes, "of the whole "people following the Greek ritual, the key of the "Church of Bethlehem has been made over to the "Latins, so as publicly to demonstrate their religious "supremacy in the East. The mischief then is done, "M. le Baron, and there is no longer any question of "preventing it. It is now necessary to remedy it. "The immunities of the Orthodox religion which have "been injured, the promise which the Sultan had "solemnly given to the Emperor, and which has been "violated, call for an act of reparation. It is to ob-"tain this that we must labour. If we took for our "example the imperious and violent proceedings which "have brought France to this result — if, like her, "we were indifferent to the dignity of the Porte, to "the consequences which an heroic remedy may have "on a constitution already so shattered as that of the

* Ibid., Dec. 28, 1852; but see Mr. Pisani's note, p. 106.

"Ottoman Empire — our course would be already "marked out for us, and we should not have long to "reflect upon it. Menace and a resort to force would "be our immediate means. The cannon has been "called the last argument of kings, the French Govern- "ment has made it its first. It is the argument with "which, at the outset, it declared its intention to "commence its proceedings at Tripoli as well as at "Constantinople. Notwithstanding our legitimate "causes of complaint, and at the risk of waiting some "time longer for redress, we shall take a less sum- "mary course. . . . It may happen that France, per- "ceiving any hesitation on the part of the Porte, may "again have recourse to menace, and press upon it "so as to prevent it from listening to our just de- "mands. . . . The Emperor has therefore considered "it necessary to adopt in the outset some precau- "tionary measures in order to support our negotia- "tions, to neutralise the effect of M. Lavalette's "threats, and to guard himself in any contingency "which may occur against a Government accustomed "to act by surprises."*

Advance of Russian forces.

Nor were these empty words. The same authentic page** which tells of this triumph of Church over Church goes on to show how the Czar was preparing for vengeance. "Orders," says Sir Hamilton Seymour, "have been despatched to the 5th corps d'armée to

* Count Nesselrode to Baron Brunnow, 14th January 1853. Ibid. p. 61.

** "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 56.

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"advance to the frontiers of the Danubian provinces "without waiting for their reserves, and the 4th corps, "under the command of General Count Dannenburg, "and now stationed in Volhynia, will be ordered to "hold itself in readiness to march if necessary. General "Lüders's corps d'armée, accordingly, being now 48,000 "strong, will receive a reinforcement of 24,000 men "soon after its arrival at its destination; and sup- "posing the 4th corps to follow, the whole force will "amount at least, according to official returns, to "144,000 men."

Is it true that for this cause great armies were gathering, and that for the sake of the key and the silver star the peace of the nations was brought into danger? Had the world grown young once more?

The strife of the Churches was no fable, but after all, though near and distinct, it was only the lesser truth. A crowd of monks with bare foreheads stood quarrelling for a key at the sunny gates of a church in Palestine, but beyond and above, towering high in the misty North, men saw the ambition of the Czars.

CHAPTER IV.

CHAP. IV.

Natural ambition of Russia.

MEN dwelling amidst the snows of Russia are driven by very nature to grow covetous when they hear of the happier lands where all the year round there are roses and long sunny days. And since this people have a seabord and ports on the Euxine, they are forced by an everlasting policy to desire the command of the straits which lead through the heart of an empire into the midst of that world of which men kindle thoughts when they speak of the Ægean and of Greece, and the Ionian shores, and of Palestine and Egypt, and of Italy, and of France, and of Spain and the land of the Moors, and of the Atlantic beyond, and the path of ships on the Ocean. Gifted with the knowledge and the skill which are means of excellence in the diplomatic art, and excluded by their institutions from taking any but an official part in the home Government, the Russian nobles had long been accustomed to bend their minds to foreign policy, and the State, favouring this inclination, used to multiply the labours of its diplomatic service. Almost every gifted and accomplished Russian who might be travelling in foreign countries used to receive instructions of some kind from his Government, and

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was enabled to believe that, either by collecting information or in some still more important way, he was performing a duty towards the State. Men thus intrusted became eager partakers of a policy rather more enterprising than the policy avowed by their Government, and the result was that the natural ambition of the country was always being nurtured and subserved by a great Aristocracy.

But, moreover, the ambition of the Statesmen and the Nobles was reinforced by the pious desire of the humbler classes. Some fifty millions of men in Russia held one creed; and they held it, too, with the earnestness of which Western Europe used to have experience in earlier times. In her wars Russia had always been engaged against nations which were not of her faith; and twice at least in the very agony of her national life, and when all other hope was gone, she had been rescued by the warlike zeal of her priesthood. By these causes love of country and devotion to the Church had become so closely welded into one engrossing sentiment, that good Muscovites could not sever the one idea from the other;* and although they were by nature a kind and good-humoured race of men, they were fierce in the matter of their religion. They had heard of Infidels who had torn down the crosses from the Churches of Christ, and possessed them-

* I owe my perception of the causes which rendered the Russian Church so intensely national to Arthur Stanley's most interesting work upon the Greek Church.

selves of the great city, the capital of the Orthodox Church; and, as far as they could judge, it would be a work of piety, with the permission of the Czar their father, to slaughter and extirpate the Turks. But this was not all. They knew that in the Turkish dominions there were ten or fourteen millions of men holding exactly the same faith as themselves, who were kept down in thraldom by the Moslems, and they had heard tales of the sufferings of these their brethren which seemed to call for vengeance. The very indulgence with which the Turks had allowed these Christians to have a distinct corporate existence in the Empire gave weight to their prayers; for, instead of being only a disorganised multitude of sufferers, they seemed to be, as it were, a suppliant nation, ever kneeling before the great Czar, and imploring him to deliver them from their captivity. It was not possible for the Russian people to conceive any enterprise more worthy of their nation and their Church than to raise high the banner of the Cross, drive the infidel Turks out of Europe, and cause the broad provinces in which their Christian brethren lived and suffered to be blended with "Holy Russia." It is true that the Muscovite peasants were not an enterprising race of men, and it might be hard perhaps to find a villager who, if he could have his choice, would rather be a soldier of the Cross than remain at home in his hut; but the people knew that, whether there were peace or whether there were war, the

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exigency of their Czar's military system would always go on consuming their youth, and since this engine of a vast standing army was destined to be kept up and to be fed with their flesh and blood, they desired in their simple hearts that it should be used for a purpose which they believed to be holy and righteous. To a cause having all these sanctions the voice of prophecy could not be wanting. Seers foretold the destruction of the Turks by the men of the yellow hair.

Yet, vast as it was in its aggregate force, the heart's desire of a whole nation would have been vague and dim of sight if it had not some famed city for its goal, or some outward and visible figure or sign to which the multitude could point as the symbol of its great intent. The people were not without their goal nor without their symbol, for the city whither they tended was the imperial city of Constantine, once mistress of the world, and the Cross that the Emperor had seen in the heavens was still the sign in which the Church said they must conquer. For such as were the politic few there was the Golden Horn, with its command of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and all its fair promise of wealth and empire. In the horizon of the pious multitude there rose the dome of St Sophia. Ambition was sanctified by Religion. The most pious might righteously desire that the devotion of their militant Church should be aided by the wisdom of the serpent, and the most worldly-minded

statesman could look with approval upon the scheme of a lucrative crusade. The Emperor Alexander the First, when he declared that for the time he was trying to withstand the ambition of his people, acknowledged that he was "the only Russian who "resisted the views of his subjects upon Turkey."*

The Czar was the head of the Church. It was not without raising scruples in the minds of the pious that his predecessors had been able to attain ecclesiastical authority; but this shadow of doubt upon the title of the lay Pontiff made it all the more needful for him to take care that his zeal should be above reproach. It is true that the great body of the Muscovite people were simple and docile, not partaking in cares of Government, and that even among the most powerful Nobles there were none who would be unwilling to leave the choice of time and of measures to the Chief of the State; but still the religious mind of the vast empire would have been dangerously shocked if the priests had been forced to know that the Czar failed to share the pious desire of his people; and the minds of men accustomed to bend their thoughts to the aggrandisement of the nation would be overclouded and chilled if they saw that the Emperor was growing forgetful of their favourite cause.

But the prospect of what would follow upon the realisation of this scheme of ambition was dim. The

* Quoted by Sir H. Seymour, "Eastern Papers," part v. p. 11.

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sovereignty of European Turkey could scarcely be added to the possessions of the Czar without tending to dislocate the system of his empire; for plainly it would be difficult to sway the vast Northern territories of All the Russias by orders sent from the Bosphorus, and yet, by force of its mere place in the world, Constantinople seemed destined to be the capital of a great State. Therefore, in the event of its falling into the hands of the Romanoffs, it may be thought more likely that the imperial city would draw dominion to itself, and so become the metropolis of some new assemblage of territories, than that it would sink into the condition of a provincial seaport. The statesmen of St Petersburg have always understood the deep import of the change which the throne of Constantine would bring with it; and it may be imagined that considerations founded on this aspect of the enticing conquest have mingled with those suggested by the physical difficulties of invasion, the obstinate valour of the Turks, and the hostility of the great Powers of Europe. Still, the prize was so unspeakably alluring to an aristocracy fired with national ambition, and to a people glowing with piety, that apparently it was necessary for the Czar to seem as though he were always doing something for furthering a scheme of conquest thus endeared to the nation. He was liable to be deemed a failing champion of the faith when he was not labouring to restore the insulted Cross to the Church of Constantine; he was chilling

the healthy zeal of his ablest servants if he lived idle days making no approach to the Bosphorus.

Its irresolute nature.

Upon the whole, it resulted from the various motives tending to govern the policy of the State that the ambition of the Russian emperors in the direction of Constantinople was generally alive and watchful, and sometimes active, but was always irresolute. The First Napoleon said, in the early years of this century,* that the Czars were always threatening Constantinople and never taking it; and what he said then had already been true for a long time, and his words continued to be a true description of the Russian policy for half a century afterwards. Evidently it answered the purpose of the Czars to have it thought amongst their own people that they were steadily advancing towards the conquest, but they always suffered their reasons for delay to prevail. They had two minds upon the question. They were willing, but they were also unwilling, and this clashing of motives caused them to falter. At home they naturally tried to make their ambition apparent — abroad, as might be expected, they were more careful to display the inclinations forced upon them by prudence; but it would seem that this double face was not simply a deceptive contrivance, but resulted from imperfect volition. The project against Constantinople was a scheme of conquest continually to be delayed, but never discarded; and, happen what might,

* "La Russie a trop menacé Constantinople sans le prendre."

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it was never to be endured that the prospect of Russia's attaining some day to the Bosphorus should be shut out by the ambition of any other Power.

Of course it followed that a great State ambition of this watchful but irresolute kind would be stimulated to an increased activity by the disappearance of any of the chief obstacles lying in the way of the enterprise; and especially this would be the case whenever the course of affairs seemed to be unfavourable to an alliance against Russia between the other great Powers of Europe.

The Emperor Nicholas.

The Emperor Nicholas held an absolute sway over his Empire, and his power was not moderated by the salutary resistance of ministers who had strength enough to decline to take part in acts which they disapproved. The old restraints which used sometimes to fetter the power of the Russian monarchs had fallen away, and nothing had yet come in their stead. Holding the boundless authority of an Oriental Potentate, the Czar was armed besides with all the power which is supplied by high organisation and the clever appliances of modern times. What he chose to do he actually did. He might be sitting alone and reading a despatch, and if it happened that its contents made him angry, he could touch a bell and kindle a war without hearing counsel from any living man. In the room where he laboured he could hear overhead the clicking of machinery, and he liked the sound of the restless magnets, for they were giving instant effect to his will in regions

far away. He was of a stern, unrelenting nature. He displayed, when he came to be tried, a sameness of ideas and of language and a want of resource which indicated poverty of intellect; but this dearth within was masked by the brilliancy of the qualities which adorned the surface; and he was so capable of business, and had such a vast activity, that he was able to arrogate to himself an immense share of the actual governance of his subjects. Indeed, by striving to extend his management beyond the proper compass of a single mind he disturbed the march of business, and so far superseded the responsibility of his servants, that he ended by lessening to a perilous extent the number of gifted men who in former times had taken part in the counsels of the State. Still, this widely-ranging activity kept alive the awe with which his subjects watched to see where next he would strike; and made the nation feel that, along with his vast stature and his commanding presence, he carried the actual power of the State. He had been merciless towards the Polish nation; but whilst this sternness made him an object of hatred to millions of discomfited men, and to other millions of men who felt for them in their sorrows, it tended, perhaps, at the time to increase his ascendancy, by making him an object of dread, and it trebled the delight of being with him in his gentle mood. When he was friendly, or chose to seem so, there was a glow and frankness in his manner which had an irresistible charm. He had discarded in some measure his pre-

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decessor's system of governing Russia through the aid of foreigners, and took a pride in his own people, and understood their worth. In the great empire of the North religion is closely blended with the national sentiment, and in this composite shape it had a strong hold upon the Czar. It did not much govern him in his daily life, and his way of joining in the service of the Church seemed to disclose something like impatience and disdain, but no one doubted that faith was deeply rooted in his mind. He had the air of a man raised above the level of common worshippers, who imagined that he was appointed to serve the cause of his Church by great imperial achievements, and not by humble feats of morality and devotion. It will be seen but too plainly that the Emperor Nicholas could be guilty of saying one thing and doing another; and it may be supposed, therefore, that at once and in plain terms he ought to be charged with duplicity; yet there are circumstances which make one falter in coming to such a conclusion. He had reigned, and had personally governed, for some seven-and-twenty years; and although during that period he had done much to raise bitter hatred, the most sagacious statesmen in Europe placed faith in his personal honour. It is certain that he had the love of truth. When he sought to speak of what he deemed fair and honourable, he travelled into our language for the word which spoke his meaning, and claimed to have the same standard of uprightness as an English "gentleman." It is known

also that his ideal of human grandeur was the character of the Duke of Wellington. No man could have made that choice without having truth in him.

It would seem, however, that beneath the virtues which for more than a quarter of a century had enabled the Czar to stand before Europe as a man of honour and truth, there lurked a set of opposite qualities; and that when he reached the period of life which has often been found a trying one to men of the Romanoff family, a deterioration began to take place which shook the ascendant of his better nature. After the beginning of 1853 there were strange alternations in his conduct. At one time he seemed to be so frank and straightforward that the most wary statesmen could not and would not believe him to be intending deceit. Then, and even within a few hours, he would steal off and be false. But the vice which he disclosed in those weak intervals was not the profound deceit of statecraft, but rather the odd purporseless cunning of a gipsy or a savage, who shows by some sudden and harmless sign of his wild blood that, even after years of conformity to European ways, he has not been completely reclaimed. For the present, however, the Emperor Nicholas must be looked upon not merely as he was, but as he seemed to be; and what he seemed to be in the beginning of 1853 was a firm, righteous man, too brave and too proud to be capable of descending to falsehood.

Nicholas had a violent will; but of course when

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he underwent the change which robbed him of his singleness of mind, his resolves, notwithstanding their native force, could not fail to lose their momentum. He was a man too military to be warlike; and was not only without the qualities for wielding an army in the field, but was mistaken also as to the way in which the best soldiers are made: under his sway Russia was so oppressively drilled that much of the fire and spirit of enterprise which are needed for war was crushed out by military training. No man, however, could toil with more zeal than he did in that branch of industry which seeks to give uniformity and mechanic action to bodies of men. He was an unwearied inspector of troops. He kept close at hand great numbers of small wooden images clothed in various uniforms, and one of the rooms in his favourite palace was filled with these military dolls.

The Emperor Nicholas had not been long upon the throne, when he showed that he was a partaker of the ambition of his people; for in 1828 he had begun an invasion of Turkey, and was present with his army in some of the labours of the campaign: but his experience was of a painful kind. The mechanical organisation in which he delighted broke down under stress of real war carried on upon an extended line of operations. In the country of the Danube his soldiery perished fast from sickness and want; and although he had so well chosen his time that the Sultan was without an ally, and (having

but lately put to death his own army) was in an ill condition for war, still he encountered so much of obstinate and troublesome resistance from the Turks, and was so ill able to cope with it, that at the instance, as is said, of his own Generals, he retired from the scene of conflict, and went back to St Petersburg, with the galling knowledge that he was without the gifts which make an able commander in the field. He could not but see, too, that the military reputation of Russia was brought into great peril; and although in the following year he was rescued from the dangerous straits into which he had run, by the brilliant audacity of Diebitsch, by the skill of his diplomacy, and above all by indulgent fortune, still he was so chastened by the anxiety of the time, and by the narrowness of his escape from a great humiliation, that he ceased to entertain any hope or intention of dismembering Turkey, except in the event of there occurring a chain of circumstances which should enable him to act with the concurrence of other great Powers.

But the Emperor knew that the pride of his people would be deeply wounded if any great changes should take place in the Ottoman Empire without bringing gain to Russia and accelerating her march to Constantinople; and therefore he believed that, until he was prepared to take a part in dismembering the Empire, it was his interest to preserve it intact. For more than twenty years his actions as well as his declared intentions were in accordance

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with this view; and it would be wrong to believe that the policy thus shown forth to the world was only a mask. Just as the love of killing game generates a sincere wish to preserve it, so the very fact that the Czar looked upon Turkey as eventual booty, made him anxious to protect it from every other kind of danger. In 1833 the Emperor Nicholas saved the Sultan and his dynasty from destruction; and although he accompanied this measure with an act offensive to the other maritime Powers,* his conduct towards Turkey was loyal. In 1840 he again acted faithfully towards the Sultan, and joined with England and the leading Powers of Germany in preventing the disruption of the Ottoman Empire.

In 1844 the Czar came to England, and anxiously strove to find out whether there were any of our leading statesmen who had grown weary of a conservative policy in Turkey. He talked confidentially with the Duke of Wellington and Lord Aberdeen, and also, no doubt, with Sir Robert Peel; but evidently meeting with no encouragement, he covered his retreat by giving in his adhesion to England's accustomed policy, and to do this with the better effect, he left in our Foreign Office a solemn declaration not only of his own policy, but likewise, strange to say, of the policy of Austria; and all this he blended in a somewhat curious manner with words

* The Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi.

which might be read as importing that his views had obtained the sanction of the English Government. It would seem that our Government agreed, as they naturally would, to that part of the Czar's memorandum which was applicable to the existing state of things, and which, in fact, echoed the known opinion of England; and they also assented to the obvious proposition that the event of a breaking-up of the Ottoman Empire would make it important for the great Powers to come to an understanding amongst themselves; but it must be certain that the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, and Lord Aberdeen refrained, as it is the custom of our Statesmen to do, from all hypothetical engagements. "Russia and England," said this Memorandum, "are "mutually penetrated with the conviction, that it is "for their common interest that the Ottoman Porte "should maintain itself in the state of independence "and of territorial possession which at present con-"stitutes that Empire. Being agreed on this principle, "Russia and England have an equal interest in uniting "their efforts in order to keep up the existence of the "Ottoman Empire, and to avert all the dangers which "can place in jeopardy its safety. With this object, "the essential point is to suffer the Porte to live in "repose, without needlessly disturbing it by diplomatic "bickerings, and without interfering, without absolute "necessity, in its internal affairs." Then, after showing that the tendency of the Turkish Government to evade treaties and ill-use its Christian subjects ought

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to be checked rather by the combined and friendly remonstrance of all the Powers than by the separate action of one, the Memorandum proceeded: "If all "the great Powers frankly adopt this line of conduct, "they will have a well-founded expectation of preserv- "ing the existence of Turkey. However, they must "not conceal from themselves how many elements of "dissolution that Empire contains within itself. Un- "foreseen circumstances may hasten its fall. . . . In "the uncertainty which hovers over the future, a "single fundamental idea seems to admit of a really "practical application: it is, that the danger which "may result from a catastrophe in Turkey will be "much diminished if, in the event of its occurring, "Russia and England have come to an understanding "as to the course to be taken by them in common. "That understanding will be the more beneficial, in- "asmuch as it will have the full assent of Austria. "Between her and Russia there exists already an entire "accord."

His policy from 1829 to 1853.

Upon the whole, it would seem that from the peace of Adrianople down to the beginning of 1853 the state of the Czar's mind upon the Eastern Question was this: — He was always ready to come forward as an eager and almost ferocious defender of his Church, and he deemed this motive to be one of such cogency that views resting on mere policy and prudence were always in danger of being overborne by it; but in the absence of events tending to bring this fiery principle into action, he was really

unwilling to face the troubles which would arise from the dismemberment of Turkey, unless he could know beforehand that England would act with him. If he could have obtained any anterior assurance to that effect, he would have tried perhaps to accelerate the disruption of the Sultan's Empire; but as England always declined to found any engagements upon the hypothesis of a catastrophe which she wished to prevent, the Emperor had probably accustomed himself to believe that Providence did not design to allot to him the momentous labour of governing the fall of the Ottoman Empire. He therefore chose the other alternative, and not only spoke but really did much for the preservation of an Empire which he was not yet ready to destroy. Still, whenever any subject of irritation occurred, the attractive force of the opposite policy was more or less felt; for it is not every man who, having to choose between two lines of action, can resolve to hold to the one and frankly discard the other. In general, the principle governing such a conflict is found to be analogous to the law which determines the composition of mechanic forces, and the mental struggle does not result in a clear adoption of either of the alternatives, but in a mean betwixt the two. It was thus with the Emperor Nicholas whenever it happened that he was irritated by questions connected with the action of the Turkish Government. At such times his conduct, swayed in one direction by the notion of dismembering the Empire, and in the other

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direction by the policy of maintaining it, resulted in an endeavour to establish what the English Ambassador called "a predominant influence over the counsels of the Porte, tending in the interest of absolute power to exclude all other influences, and to secure the means, if not of hastening the downfall of the Empire, at least of obstructing its improvement, and settling its future destinies to the profit of Russia, whenever a propitious juncture should arrive."*

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 237.

CHAPTER V.

CHAP. V.

Troubles in Montenegro.

It happened that at a time* when the Emperor of Russia was wrought to anger by the triumph of the Latin over the Greek Church, there were troubles in one of the provinces bordering upon the Austrian territory, and Omar Pasha. at the head of a Turkish force, was operating against the Christians in Montenegro. The continuance of this strife on her frontier was no doubt alarming and vexatious to Austria; but with the Emperor Nicholas the tidings of a conflict going on between a Moslem soldiery and a Christian people of the Greek faith could not fail to kindle his religious zeal, and cause him to thirst for vengeance against the enemies of his Church. Of course the existence of this feeling on the part of the Czar was well understood at Vienna, and it was probably in order to anticipate his wishes, and to remove his motives for interference, that the Austrian Cabinet determined to address a peremptory summons to the Porte, calling upon the Sultan to withdraw his forces immediately from Montenegro.

* The winter of 1852-3.

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The Czar secretly but studiously represented that upon this and every other matter touching his policy in Turkey he was in close accord with Austria.* This, however, the Austrian Government denies. Truthful men declare that the Czar was not even informed beforehand of the demand which Austria had resolved to press upon the Porte. It is certain, however, that the Czar determined to act as though he were in close concert with Austria. Count Leiningen was to be the bearer of the Austrian summons; and simultaneously with the Count's departure from Vienna, the Emperor Nicholas resolved to despatch to the Porte an Ambassador Extraordinary, who was to declare that a refusal to withdraw Omar Pasha's forces from Montenegro would be regarded by the Czar as a ground of war between him and the Sultan; and the Ambassador was also to be charged with the duty of obtaining redress for the change which had been made in the allotment of the Holy Sites to the contending Churches. It may seem strange that the Czar should propose to found a declaration of war upon a grievance which was put forward by the Cabinet of Vienna, and not by himself; but he was always eager to stand forward as the protector of Christians of his own Church who had taken up arms against their Moslem rulers; and when, as now, his conservative policy was disturbed by anger and religious zeal, his ulterior views upon the Eastern

Count Leiningen's mission.

The Czar's plan of sending another mission to the Porte at the same time.

* "Eastern Papers," part v., in several places.

Question became too vague, and also, no doubt, too alarming, to admit of their being made the subject of a treaty engagement with Austria. CHAP. V.

Plans of the Emperor Nicholas.

Apparently, then, the plan of the Emperor Nicholas was this: — he would make the rejection of Count Leiningen's demand a ground of war against the Porte, and then, acting under the blended motives furnished by the assigned cause of war and by his own separate grievance, he would avenge the wrong done to his Church by forcing the Sultan to submit to a foreign protectorate over all his provinces lying north of the Balkan. This, however, was only one view of the contemplated war. It might be applicable, if the occupation of the tributary provinces should evoke no element of trouble except the sheer resistance of the enemy; but the Czar, who did not well understand the Turkish Empire, was firmly convinced at this time that the approach of war would be followed by a rising of the Sultan's Christian subjects. On the other hand, he feared, and with better reason, that if the angry Moslems should deem the Sultan remiss or faint-hearted in the defence of his territory, they might rise against their Government and fall upon the Christian rayahs, whom they would regard as the abettors of the invasion. He could not fail to perceive that in the progress of the contemplated operations he might be forced by events to give a vast extension to his views against the Sultan; and that, even against his

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will, and without being prepared for the crisis, he might find himself called upon to deal with the ruins of the Ottoman Empire in the midst of confusion and massacre.

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Now, therefore, it became needful for the Emperor Nicholas to endeavour to divine the temper in which the other great Powers of Europe would be inclined to regard his intended pressure upon the Sultan, and the eventual catastrophe which, even if he should wish it, he might soon be unable to avert. It was of deep moment to him to know what help or acquiescence he might reckon upon, and what hostility he might have to encounter, if he should be called upon to take part in regulating the collapse of the Turkish Empire, and controlling the arrangements which were to follow.

Position of Austria in regard to Turkey at the beginning of 1853.

He looked around. The policy of one of the great States of Europe was bent out of its true course, and in others there were signs of weak purpose. The Power most deeply interested in preventing the dismemberment of European Turkey had already determined to press upon the Sultan an unjust and offensive demand; and although the statesmen of Vienna might have resolved in their own minds to stop short at some prescribed stage of the contemplated hostilities, it was plain that Austria, when once engaged in war against the Sultan, would lose

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the standing-ground of a Power which undertakes to resist change, and would become so entangled by the mere progress of events, that it would be difficult for her to extricate herself and revert to a conservative policy. Indeed, the Emperor Nicholas might fairly expect that Austria, having committed the original mistake of disturbing the peace, would afterwards strive to cling to his friendship in the hope of being able to moderate his course of action, and avert or mitigate the downfall of the Turkish Empire.

Of Prussia.

With respect to Prussia, the Emperor Nicholas was free from anxiety. As long as the measures against the Sultan were carried on in alliance with Austria, the States of Germany had little ground for fearing that the interest which they had in the freedom of the Lower Danube would be forgotten; and this object being secured, or regarded as secure, Prussia had less interest in the fate of the Ottoman Empire than any of the other great Powers. There being, therefore, no reason of state obliging him to take a contrary course, it was to be expected that the King of Prussia would continue to live under the ascendancy which his Imperial brother-in-law had long been accustomed to maintain.

Of France.

France, having great military and naval forces, and a Mediterranean seabord, was well entitled to frame for herself any honest system of policy which she might deem to be the best guide for her conduct in Eastern affairs; but the time for her having a

policy of her own had passed away, for she had fallen under the mere control of the Second Bonaparte; and in order to divine what France would do, it was necessary to make out what scheme of action her ruler would deem to be most conducive to his comfort and safety. Even the supposition that he would copy the First Napoleon gave no sufficing clue for saying what his Eastern policy ought to be, or what it was, or what it was likely to be in any future week. France, as wielded by a Bonaparte, had been known to the Sultan sometimes as a friendly Power, sometimes as a Power pretending to be friendly to him but secretly bargaining for the dismemberment of his empire; sometimes as a mere predatory State seizing his provinces in time of peace and without the pretence of a quarrel,* and sometimes even as a rival Mahometan Power — for it is known that the First Bonaparte did not scruple to call himself in Egypt a true Mussulman;** and although he now and then claimed to be "the eldest "son of the Catholic Church," he first introduced himself in the Levant as the soldier of a nation which had "renounced the Messiah."

Upon the whole, there seemed to be no reason why the new French Emperor should refuse to join with Russia in trying to bring about the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire, and to arrange the

* *e. g.*, Bonaparte's predatory invasion of Egypt in time of peace.

** A falsified copy of the manifesto was sent to France. The one really issued represented Bonaparte as a Mahometan.

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distribution of the spoil. Indeed, the great extension which France had given of late to her navy, rendered views of this kind less chimerical than they were at the time of the Secret Articles of Tilsit. But, on the other hand, it was the French Government which had provoked the religious excitement under which Nicholas was labouring; and although it is believed that when his troubles increased upon him the Czar afterwards made overtures to France, it would seem that in the beginning of 1853 he was too angry and too scornful towards the French Emperor to be able to harbour the thought of making him his ally. Of the danger lest France should suddenly adopt a conservative policy, and undertake to resist his arrangements in the East of Europe, the Emperor Nicholas made light, for he had resolved at this time not to place himself in conflict with England; and the operations of any Western Power in Turkey being dependent upon sea-communications, he did not think it to be within the wide compass of possible events that France, single-handed and without the alliance of her maritime neighbour, would or could obstruct him in the Levant. "He cared," he said, "very "little what line the French might think proper to "take in Eastern affairs; and he had apprised the "Sultan that if his assistance were required for re-"sisting the menaces of the French it was entirely "at the service of the Sultan."* "When we (Russia

* "Eastern Papers," part v. p. 10.

"and England) are agreed, I am quite without an- CHAP. VI.
"xiety as to the West of Europe: it is immaterial
"what the others may think or do."*

Of England. Seeming state of opinion there.

There remained, then, only England, and upon the whole it had come to this: that the Emperor Nicholas would feel able to meet the emergency occasioned by the downfall of the Sultan, and might perhaps be inclined to do a little towards bringing about the catastrophe, if beforehand he could come to an understanding with the English Government as to the way in which Europe should deal with the fragments of the Turkish Empire. But he had learned, as he said, that an alliance with England must depend upon the feeling of the country at large,** and this he strove hard to understand.

England had long been an enigma to the political students of the Continent, but after the summer of 1851 they began to imagine that they really at last understood her. They thought that she was falling from her place among nations; and indeed there were signs which might well lead a shallow observer to fancy that her ancient spirit was failing her. An army is but the limb of a nation, and it is no more given to a people to combine the possession of military strength with an unmeasured devotion to the arts of peace, than it is for a man to be feeble and helpless in the general condition of his body, and yet to have at his command a strong right arm

* "Eastern Papers," part v. p. 1.

** Ibid., part iii.

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for the convenience of self-defence. The strength of the right arm is as the strength of the man: the prowess of an army is as the valour and warlike spirit of the nation which gives it her flesh and blood. England, having suffered herself to grow forgetful of this truth, seemed, in the eyes of foreigners, to be declining. It was not the reduction of the military and establishments which was the really evil sign: for — to say nothing of ancient times — the Swiss in Europe, and some of the States of the North American continent, have shown the world that a people which almost dispenses with a standing army may yet be among the most resolute and warlike of nations; but there was in England a general decrying of arms. Well-meaning men harangued and lectured in this spirit. What they sincerely desired was a continuance of peace; but instead of taking the thought and acquiring the knowledge which might have qualified them to warn their fellow-countrymen against steps tending to a needless war, they squandered their indignation upon the deceased authors of former wars, and used language of such breadth that what they said was as applicable to one war as to another. At length they generated a sect called the "Peace Party," which denounced war in strong indiscriminate terms.

Moreover, at this time extravagant veneration was avowed for mechanical contrivances, and the very words which grateful nations had wrought from out of their hearts in praise of tried chiefs and heroes

were plundered, as it were, from the warlike professions, and given to those who for their own gain could make the best goods. It was no longer enough to say that an honest tradesman was a valuable member of society, or that a man who contrived a good machine was ingenious. More was expected from those who had the utterance of the public feeling; and it was announced that "glory" and "honour" — nay, to prevent all mistake, "true honour" and "true glory" — were due to him who could produce the best articles of trade. At length, in the summer of 1851, it was made to appear to foreigners that this singular faith had demanded and obtained an outward sign of its acceptance, and a solemn recognition by Church and State. The foreigners were mistaken. The truth is that the English, in their exuberant strength and their carelessness about the strict import of words, are accustomed to indulge a certain extravagance in their demonstrations of public feeling; and this is the more bewildering to foreign minds because it goes along with practical moderation and wisdom. What the English really meant was to give people an opportunity of seeing the new inventions and comparing all kinds of patterns, but, above all, to have a new kind of show, and bring about an immense gathering of people. Perhaps, too, in the secret hearts of many who were weary of tame life there lurked a hope of animating tumults. This was all the English really meant. But the political philosophers of the Continent were resolved to impute to

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the islanders a more profound intent. They saw in the festival a solemn renouncing of all such dominion as rests upon force. England, they thought, was closing her great career by a whimsical act of abdication; and it must be acknowledged that there was enough to confound men accustomed to lay stress upon symbols. For the glory of mechanic Arts, and in token of their conquest over nature, a cathedral of glass climbed high over the stately elms of Knightsbridge, enclosing them, as it were, in a casket the work of men's hands, and it was not thought wrong nor impious to give the work the sanction of a religious ceremony. It was by the Archbishop of Canterbury that the money-changers were brought back into the temple. Few protested. One man, indeed, abounding in Scripture, and inflamed with the sight of the glass Babel ascending to the skies, stood up and denounced the work, and foretold "wars" and "judgments."* But he was a prophet speaking to the wrong generation, and no one heeded him. Indeed, it seemed likely that the soundness of his mind would be questioned; and if he went on to foretell that within three years England would be engaged in a bloody war springing out of a dispute about a key and a silver star, he was probably adjudged to be mad, for the whole country at the time felt sure of its peaceful temper. Certainly it was a hard task for the sagacity of a foreigner to pierce through these outward signs, and see that, notwithstanding

* This I witnessed.

them all, the old familiar "Eastern Question" might be so used as to make it rekindle the warlike ardour of England. Even for Englishmen, until long after the beginning of 1853, it was difficult to foresee how the country would be willing to act in regard to the defence of Turkey; and the representatives of foreign Powers accredited to St James's might be excused if they assured their Courts that England was deep in pursuits which would hinder her from all due assertion of her will as a great European Power.

Thus foreigners came to believe that the English nature was changed, and that for the future the country would always be tame in Europe; and it chanced that, in the beginning of the year 1853, they were strengthened in their faith by observing the structure of the Ministry then recently formed; for Lord Palmerston, whose name had become associated with the idea of a resolute and watchful policy, was banished to the Home Office, and the Prime Minister was Lord Aberdeen, the same statesman who had held the seals of the Foreign Office in former years, when Austria was vainly entreating England to join with her in defending the Sultan. The Emperor Nicholas heard the tidings of Lord Aberdeen's elevation to the premiership with a delight which he did not suppress. Yet this very event, as will be seen, was a main link in the chain of causes which was destined to draw the Czar into war, and bring him in misery to the grave.

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But if there was a phantasy in vogue which seemed likely to make England acquiesce in transactions adverse to her accustomed policy in the East, there were other counsels afloat which, although they were based on very different views, seemed to tend in the same direction, for some of our countrymen were beginning to perceive that the restoration of a Bonapartist Empire in France would bring back with it the traditions and the predatory schemes of the First Napoleon. These advisers were unwilling that the elements of the great alliance which, thirty-eight years before, had delivered Europe from its thraldom, should now be cast asunder for the mere sake of giving a better effect to the policy which the Foreign Office was accustomed to follow upon the Eastern Question. And in truth this same Eastern policy, though held by almost all responsible statesmen, was not so universally received in England as to go altogether unchallenged. The notion of England's standing still and suffering the Turks to be driven from Europe, was not deemed so preposterous as to be unworthy of being put forward by men commanding great means of persuasion; and before the new year* was far advanced, the Emperor Nicholas had means of knowing that the old English policy of averting the dismemberment of Turkey would be gravely questioned, and brought in an effective way to the test of printed discussion. Upon the whole, therefore,

* 1853.

it seemed to the Czar that now, if ever, England might be willing to acquiesce in his encroachments upon Turkey, and even perhaps to abet him in schemes for the actual dismemberment of the Empire.

Sir Hamilton Seymour.

The Minister who represented the Queen at the Russian Court was Sir Hamilton Seymour. It is said that before there was a prospect of his being accredited at St Petersburg he had conceived a high admiration of the qualities of the Emperor Nicholas, and that this circumstance, becoming known to the Czar, tended at first to make the English Minister more than commonly welcome at the Imperial Court. Sir Hamilton was not so constituted as to be liable to the kind of awe which other diplomatists too often felt in the majestic presence of the Emperor; but his despatches show that he was much interested, and, so to speak, amused, by the conversation of a prince who wielded with his own very hand the power of All the Russias. Moreover, Sir Hamilton had the quickness and the presence of mind which enable a man to seize the true bearing and import of a sentence just uttered, and to meet it at the instant with the few and appropriate words which convey the needful answer, and provoke a still further disclosure.

On the night of the 9th of January 1853, the English Minister was at a party gathered in the palace of the Archduchess Helen, when the Emperor Nicholas approached him, and drew him into conversation.

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His conversation with the Emperor.

"You know my feelings", the Emperor said, "with "regard to England. What I have told you before "I say again: it was intended that the two countries "should be upon terms of close amity; and I feel "sure that this will continue to be the case. . . . I "repeat that it is very essential that the two Govern- "ments — that is, that the English Government and "I, and I and the English Government — should be "on the best terms; and the necessity was never "greater than at present. I beg you to convey these "words to Lord John Russell. When we are agreed, "I am quite without anxiety as to the West of "Europe; it is immaterial what the others may think "or do. As to Turkey, that is another question; "that country is in a critical state, and may give us "all a great deal of trouble. And now I will take "my leave of you." The Emperor then shook hands with Sir Hamilton Seymour, and believed that he had closed the conversation, but the skilled diplomatist saw and grasped his opportunity; and whilst his hand was still held by the Emperor, Sir Hamilton Seymour said, "Sir, with your gracious "permission, I would desire to take a great liberty." "Certainly," His Majesty replied; "what is it? let "me hear." Sir Hamilton said, "I should be parti- "cularly glad that your Majesty should add a few "words which may tend to calm the anxiety with "respect to the affairs of Turkey which passing "events are so calculated to excite on the part of "Her Majesty's Government. Perhaps you will be

"pleased to charge me with some additional assuran-
"ces of this kind."

The Emperor's words and manner, although still very kind, showed that he had no intention of speaking to Sir Hamilton of the demonstration which he was about to make in the South. He said, however, at first with a little hesitation, but, as he proceeded, in an open and unhesitating manner: "The affairs of "Turkey are in a very disorganised condition; the "country itself seems to be falling to pieces: the fall "will be a great misfortune, and it is very important "that England and Russia should come to a perfectly "good understanding upon these affairs, and that "neither should take any decisive step of which the "other is not apprised." The Envoy answered that this was certainly his view of the way in which Turkish questions should be treated; but the Emperor then said, as if proceeding with his remark, "Stay, we have on our hands a sick man — a very "sick man; it will be, I tell you frankly, a great "misfortune if one of these days he should slip away "from us, especially before all necessary arrange-
"ments were made. But, however, this is not the "time to speak to you on that matter."

On the 22d of January another interview took place between the Emperor and the English Envoy. "I found His Majesty," writes Sir Hamilton Seymour, "alone; he received me with great kindness, saying "that I had appeared desirous to speak to him upon "Eastern affairs; that on his side there was no in-

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"disposition to do so, but that he must begin at a "remote period. You know, His Majesty said, the "dreams and plans in which the Empress Catherine "was in the habit of indulging; these were handed "down to our time; but while I inherited immense "territorial possessions, I did not inherit those visions, "those intentions if you like to call them so. On the "contrary, my country is so vast, so happily circum-"stanced in every way, that it would be unreason-"able in me to desire more territory or more power "than I possess; on the contrary, I am the first to "tell you that our great, perhaps our only danger, "is that which would arise from an extension given "to an Empire already too large.

"Close to us lies Turkey, and in our present "condition nothing better for our interests can be "desired. The times have gone by when we had any-"thing to fear from the fanatical spirit of the military "enterprise of the Turks; and yet the country is strong "enough, or has hitherto been strong enough, to pre-"serve its independence, and to insure respectful "treatment from other countries.

"Well, in that Empire there are several millions "of Christians whose interests I am called upon to "watch over, while the right of doing so is secured "to me by treaty. I may truly say that I make a "moderate and sparing use of my right, and I will "freely confess that it is one which is attended with "obligations occasionally very inconvenient; but I "cannot recede from the discharge of a distinct duty.

"Our religion, as established in this country, came "to us from the East, and there are feelings as well "as obligations which never must be lost sight of.

"Now Turkey, in the condition which I have "described, has by degrees fallen into such a state of "decrepitude that, as I told you the other night, "eager as we all are for the prolonged existence of "the man (and that I am as desirous as you can be "for the continuance of his life, I beg you to believe), "he may suddenly die upon our hands: we cannot "resuscitate what is dead. If the Turkish Empire "falls, it falls to rise no more; and I put it to you, "therefore, whether it is not better to be provided "beforehand for a contingency, than to incur the "chaos, confusion, and the certainty of an European "war, all of which must attend the catastrophe if it "should occur unexpectedly, and before some ulte- "rior system has been sketched. This is the point to "which I am desirous you should call the attention "of your Government."

Sir Hamilton Seymour adverted to the objection which the English Government habitually felt to the plan of taking engagements upon possible eventualities, and said that disinclination might be expected in England to the idea of disposing, by anticipation, of the succession of an old friend and ally. "The "rule is a good one," the Emperor replied— "good "at all times, especially in times of uncertainty and "change like the present; still it is of the greatest "importance that we should understand one another,

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"and not allow events to take us by surprise. Now I "desire to speak to you as a friend and as a 'gentle- "man:' if England and I arrive at an understanding "in this matter, as regards the rest it matters little to "me; it is indifferent to me what others do or think. "Frankly, then, I tell you plainly that if England "thinks of establishing herself one of these days at "Constantinople, I will not allow it. I do not attri- "bute this intention to you, but it is better on these "occasions to speak plainly. For my part, I am equally "disposed to take the engagement not to establish "myself there—as proprietor that is to say, for as "occupier I do not say: it might happen that circum- "stances, if no previous provision were made, if every- "thing should be left to chance, might place me in "the position of occupying Constantinople."

On the 20th of February the Emperor came up to Sir Hamilton Seymour at a party given by the Grand Duchess Hereditary, and in the most gracious manner took him apart, saying he desired to speak to him. "If your Government," said the Emperor, "has been led to believe that Turkey retains any "elements of existence, your Government must have "received incorrect information. I repeat to you that "the sick man is dying, and we can never allow such "an event to take us by surprise. We must come "to some understanding."

Then Sir Hamilton Seymour felt himself able to infer that the Czar had settled in his own mind that

the hour for bringing about the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire must be at hand.

The next day the Emperor again sent for Sir Hamilton Seymour, and after combating the determination of the English Government to persist in regarding Turkey as a Power which might, and which probably would, remain as she was, he at length spoke out his long-reserved words of temptation. He thought, he said, that in the event of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, it might be less difficult to arrive at a satisfactory territorial arrangement than was commonly believed, and then he proceeded: "The principalities are, in fact, an inde-"pendent State under my protection: this might so "continue. Servia might receive the same form of "government. So again with Bulgaria: there seems "to be no reason why this province should not form "an independent State. As to Egypt, I quite under-"stand the importance to England of that territory. "I can then only say, that if, in the event of a dis-"tribution of the Ottoman succession upon the fall "of the Empire, you should take possession of Egypt, "I shall have no objection to offer. I would say "the same thing of Candia: that island might suit "you, and I do not know why it should not become "an English possession."

"As I did not wish," writes Sir Hamilton Seymour, "that the Emperor should imagine that an "English public servant was caught by this sort of "overture, I simply answered that I had always

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"understood that the English views upon Egypt did "not go beyond the point of securing a safe and "ready communication between British India and the "mother country. Well, said the Emperor, induce "your Government to write again upon these sub-"jects—to write more fully, and to do so without "hesitation. I have confidence in the English Go-"vernment. It is not an engagement, a convention, "which I ask of them; it is a free interchange of "ideas, and, in case of need, the word of a 'gentle-"man;' that is enough between us."*

Reception of the Czar's overtures by the English Govern-ment.

In answer to these overtures, the Government of the Queen disclaimed all notion of aiming at the possession of either Constantinople or any other of the Sultan's possessions, and accepted the assurances to the like effect which were given by the Czar. It combated the opinion that the extinction of the Ottoman Empire was near at hand, and deprecated the discussions based on that supposition as tending directly to produce the very result against which they were meant to provide. Finally, our Government, with abundance of courtesy, but in terms very stringent and clear, peremptorily refused to enter into any kind of secret engagement with Russia for the settlement of the Eastern Question.

These communications of January and February 1853 were carried on between the Emperor of Russia and the English Government upon the understand-

* "Eastern Papers," part v.

ing that they were to be held strictly secret; and for more than a year this concealment was maintained. It will be for a later page to show the ground on which the engagement for secrecy was broken, and the effect which the disclosure wrought upon the opinion of Europe, and upon the feelings of the people in England.

The Czar was baffled by the failure of his somewhat shallow plan for playing the tempter with the English Government; and an event which occurred at this same time still further conduced to the abandonment of his half-formed designs against the Sultan.

When Nicholas came to the singular resolution of declaring war against the Sultan in the event of his rejecting Austria's demand respecting Montenegro, he imagined, perhaps, that his counsels were kept strictly secret; but it seems probable that a knowledge or suspicion of the truth may have reached the Turkish Government, and helped to govern its decision. What is certain is, that the demand made by Austria was carried by Count Leiningen to Constantinople, and that, having been put forward in terms offensively peremptory, it was suddenly acceded to by the sagacious advisers of the Sultan.

Result of Count Leiningen's mission.

This contingency seems to have been unforeseen by the Emperor Nicholas; at first the tidings of it kindled in his mind strong feelings of joy, for he looked upon the deliverance of Montenegro as a triumph of his Church over the Moslem. But he

Its effect upon the plans of the Czar.

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soon perceived that this sudden attainment of the object to be sought would disconcert his plans. He found himself all at once deprived of the basis on which his scheme of action had rested; and except in respect of the question of the key and the silver star, there was nothing that he had to charge against the Sultan. On the other hand, he had failed in his endeavour to win over England to his views. He therefore relapsed into the use of the conservative language which he had been accustomed to apply to the treatment of the Eastern Question; professed his willingness to labour with England to prolong the existence of the Turkish Empire; and even went so far as to join with our Government in declaring that the way to achieve this result was to abstain "from "harassing the Porte by imperious demands, put for- "ward in a manner humiliating to its independence "and its dignity."* He abandoned the intention of going to war, and even deprived himself of the means of taking such a step with effect; for immediately upon hearing the result of Count Leiningen's mission, he stopped the purchase of horses required for enabling him to take the field.

He abandons the idea of going to war.

* "Eastern Papers," part v. p. 25.

CHAPTER VII.

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The pain of inaction.

But when a man's mind has been once thrown forward towards action, it gains so great a momentum that the ceasing of the motive which first disturbed his repose does not instantly bring him to a stand. The Czar had found himself suddenly deprived of his ground of war against the Porte by the embarrassing success of Count Leiningen's mission, and in the same week he was robbed of his last hope of the alliance which he most desired by the failure of his overtures to England. He gave up the idea of going to war, and policy commanded that for a while he should rest; but already he had so acted that rest was pain to him. He could not but be tortured with the thought that the furtive words which he had uttered to Sir Hamilton Seymour on the 21st of February were known to the Queen of England and to several of her foremost statesmen. Moreover, in a thousand forms, the bitter fruits of the delivery of the key and the star of Bethlehem, and the tidings of the triumph which the Latins had gained over his Church, and of the agony which this discomfiture had inflicted upon pious zealots, were coming home upon him, and from time to time in a fitful way

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were tormenting him, and then giving him a little rest, and then once more rekindling his fury. So he began to turn this way and that, in order that by turmoil he might smother the past, win back the self-respect which he had lost, and gain some counter-victory for his Church. He had already gathered heavy bodies of troops in the south of his empire; he had a powerful fleet in the Euxine; the Bosphorus was nigh. The Turks, trusting mainly to heavenly power, were ill-prepared. No French or English fleets were in the Levant. Above all, that shady garden at Therapia, commanding the entrance of the Euxine, and seeming to be the fit dwelling-place for a Statesman who watched against invasion from the North, was no longer paced by the English Ambassador. The great Eltchi was away. Many thought it was possible for the Czar to seize the imperial city, and treat with the anger of Europe from the Seraglio Point.

But Nicholas, though he was capable of venturing a little way into wrong paths, and was often blinded to the difference between right and wrong by a sense of religious duty, was far from being a lawless prince. His conscience, warped by Faith, would easily reconcile him to an act of violence against a Mahometan Power; but he never questioned that the fate of Turkey was a matter of concern to other Christian States as well as to his own; and he did not at this time intend to take any steps which England would regard as an outrage. The plan which he resorted

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The Czar's new scheme of action.

to as a means of giving vent to his anger, and satisfying that tendency to action which had been engendered by his preparations against the Sultan, was to go on with the scheme of sending an Extraordinary Embassy to Constantinople, to make up for the sudden loss of the Montenegro grievance by laying an increased stress upon the question of the Holy Places, and to force the Sultan to settle the dispute upon terms which, without wounding the Latins more than could be helped, should still do justice to the Greek Church. Any attempt at resistance which the Porte might make, by alleging the counter-pressure of France, was to be met by at once engaging that the Emperor of Russia with all his forces should defend the Sultan's territory against every attack by a Western Power; and well knowing that protective aid of such a kind was a burthen and not a gift, the Emperor seems to have directed that this alliance should be not merely offered, but pressed.

But the secret purpose of the mission was to make the past defaults of the Turkish Government in regard to the Holy Places of Palestine a ground for extorting a treaty engagement by which the Greek Church throughout all Turkey would be brought under the protection of Russia. It seemed to the Czar that his half-completed preparations for war would give to his demands exactly that kind of support which their offensive character required; for the position of the troops gathered in Bessarabia,

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and the activity of the last few months in Sebastopol, would not fail to make the Turks see that force was at hand. The armaments in readiness were more than enough for the occupation of the Danubian Principalities; and as soon as they should become swollen by the unfailing aid of rumours, they might easily grow to be thought a sufficing force for some great enterprise against Constantinople.

His choice of an Ambassador.

For some time the Emperor Nicholas hesitated in the choice of the person to whom this extraordinary mission should be intrusted. He hesitated between Count Orloff and Prince Mentschikoff. He did not hesitate because he was doubting which of the two men would be the fittest instrument of his policy, but rather because he had not determined what his policy should be. Count Orloff was a wise and moderate man, much associated with the Czar, and accustomed to speak to him with becoming freedom. To make choice of this trusty friend was to avoid any such outrage as would lead to the isolation of Russia. To choose Prince Mentschikoff was to choose a man whose feelings and prejudices might cause him to embitter the Czar's dispute with the Porte, and who, to say the least, could have no pretension to moderate the zeal of his master. It was for this very reason, perhaps, that he was preferred. In an evil hour Nicholas brought his doubts to an end, and made choice of Prince Mentschikoff.

Prince Mentschikoff.

Mentschikoff was a Prince of the sort which Court almanacs describe as "Serene." He was a General,

a High Admiral, the Governor of a great province, and, in short, so far as concerns official and titular rank, was one of the chief of the Czar's subjects; but Russia has not disclosed the grounds on which it was thought fit to intrust to him—first the peace, and then the military renown of his country; for when Russians are asked about the qualities of mind which caused a man to be chosen for a momentous embassy, and for the command of an army defending his country from invasion, they only say that the Prince was famous for the strange and quaint sallies of his wit. However, he was of the school of those who desired to govern the affairs of the State upon principles violently Russian, and without the aid and counsel of foreigners. It was understood that he held the Turks in contempt; and it was said also that he entertained a strong dislike of the English. He had not been schooled in diplomacy, but he was to be intrusted with the power of using a threatening tone, and was to be supported by a fleet held in readiness, and by bodies of troops impending upon the Turkish frontiers. The Emperor Nicholas seems to have thought that harsh words and a display of force might be made to supply want of skill.

Great latitude was given to Prince Mentschikoff in regard to the means by which he was to attain the objects of his mission; but it is certain that the general tenor of his instructions contravened with singular exactness the honourable and generous

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language in which the Emperor Nicholas loved to mark out the duty of the great Powers of Europe towards Turkey. In the last Secret Memorandum solemnly placed in the hands of our Envoy at St Petersburg as a record of the Emperor's determination, Nicholas, as we have seen, had laid it down that it was the duty of great Powers not "to harass the "Porte by imperious demands put forward in a "manner humiliating to its independence and dig-"nity;" and yet these very words, which so well point out what the Czar said ought not to be done, are a close description of that which he ordered his Ambassador to do.

Mentschikoff at Constantinople.

The approach of Prince Mentschikoff to Constantinople was heralded by the arrival of staff officers, who were charged to prepare the way, and cause men to feel the import of the coming embassy. For many days rumour was busy. When for some time men's minds had been kept on the rack, it became known that the expected vessel of war was nearing the gates of the Bosphorus; and at length, surrounded with pomp, and supported by the silent menace of fleets equipped, and battalions marching on the Danube, Prince Mentschikoff entered the palace of the Russian embassy. The next day another war-steamer came down, bringing the Vice-Admiral Korniloff, the commander of the Black Sea fleet, and the Chief of the Staff of the land-forces under General Rüdiger, with several other officers. All this war-like following went to show that the Ambassador

had the control of the military and naval forces which were hovering upon the Turkish Empire. Then also came tidings that General Dannenburg, commanding the cavalry of the 5th corps d'armée, had pushed his advance-guard close up to the frontiers of Moldavia; that funds had been transmitted to merchants in Moldavia and Wallachia for the purchase of rations; and, finally, that the fleet at Sebastopol was getting ready to sail at the shortest notice.

In the midst of the alarm engendered by these tidings, Prince Mentschikoff began the duties of his mission; and he so acted as to make men see that he was charged to coerce, and not to persuade. With his whole Embassy he went to the Grand Vizier's apartment at the Porte, but refused to obey the custom which imperatively required that he should wait upon Fuad Effendi, the Minister for Foreign Affairs. With him, as it was understood, the Ambassador declined to hold intercourse. Fuad Effendi, the immediate object of the affront, was the ablest member of the Government. He instantly resigned his office. The Sultan accepted his resignation. There was a panic. It was understood that Prince Mentschikoff was going to demand terms deeply humiliating and injurious to the Sultan, and that a refusal to give way would be followed by an instant attack. The Grand Vizier believed that the mission, far from being of a conciliatory character, as pretended, was meant, on the contrary, "to win some

Panic in the Divan.

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"important right from Turkey, which would destroy "her independence," and that the Czar's object was "to trample under foot the rights of the Porte and "the independence of the Sovereign."* In short, the Divan was so taken by surprise, and so overwhelmed by alarm, as to be in danger of going to ruin by the path of concession for the sake of averting a sudden blow. But there remained one hope — the English fleet was at Malta; and the Grand Vizier went to Colonel Rose, who was then in charge of our affairs at the Porte, and entreated that he would request our Admiral at Malta to come up to Vourla, in order to give the Turkish Government the support of an approaching fleet. Colonel Rose, being a firm, able man, with strength to bear a sudden load of responsibility, was not afraid to go beyond the range of common duty. He consented to do as he was asked; and although he was disavowed by the Government at home, and although his appeal to the English Admiral was rejected, it is not the less certain that his mere consent to call up the fleet allayed the panic which was endangering at that moment the very life of the Ottoman Empire. Happily there was not a complete perfect communication by telegraph between London and Constantinople; and long before the disavowal reached the Bosphorus the Turkish statesmen had recovered their usual calm. On the other hand, the Russian Government was much

Colonel Rose.

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 88.

soothed by the intelligence that the English Cabinet had declined to approve Colonel Rose's request to the Admiral, and it might be said with truth, that both the act of the Queen's Representative and the disavowal of it by his Government at home were of advantage to the public service.*

The Czar seemingly tranquillised.

It would seem that in the middle of the month of March the anger of the Emperor Nicholas had grown cool. He had always felt the difficulty of basing a war upon the question of the Holy Places alone, and the language of his Government at this time was moderate and pacific.** But unhappily there were distinct centres of action in Paris, in London, in St Petersburg, and in Constantinople, and it was constantly happening that when the fire seemed to be got down in three out of the four capitals, it would spring up with fresh strength in the fourth. Thus, at a moment when the panic of the Divan had entirely ceased, and when the Court of St Petersburg already inclining towards moderation, was about to be further pacified by the welcome tidings which informed it of the disavowal of Colonel Rose by the Home Government, the Emperor of the French suddenly determined to send a naval force into the Levant, and notwithstanding the opposition

* Colonel Rose was the officer who afterwards became illustrious for his career of victory in India, but at that later time he was known to his grateful country as Sir Hugh Rose.

** Lord Cowley's account of Count Nesselrode's Despatch of the 15th March. "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 96.

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The French fleet suddenly ordered to Salamis.

of our Government, the French fleet was ordered to Salamis. This was done without sound reason, for the panic which had induced Colonel Rose to appeal to the English Admiral at Malta had long ago ceased. The step gave deep umbrage to Russia.

When the Emperor Nicholas learned that the advance of the French fleet had been disapproved by England, his anger was followed by gladness, and the relations between the Governments of St Petersburg and London then seemed to be upon so friendly a footing as to exclude the fear of a disagreement.

The Czar's concealments.

Count Nesselrode assured Sir Hamilton Seymour that Russia was alleging no grievance against the Turkish Government except in regard to the question of the Holy Places; and even this one remaining subject of complaint he began to treat as a slighter matter than it had hitherto appeared to be. It is hard to have to believe that all this good-humour of the Court of St Petersburg was simulated; and yet the assurances of Count Nesselrode distinctly went to exclude the belief that Russia could ever do that which she was actually doing. Yielding, it would seem, to an instinct of wild cunning, the Czar failed to understand that the chance of carrying a point at Constantinople by a diplomatic surprise could never be of such worth as to deserve to be set against his old reputation for truthfulness. If he thought at all, he would see that the difference between what he was saying and what he was doing would be laid bare in three weeks. Yet he gave way to the strange impulse which forced him

to go and try to steal a trophy for his Church. He concealed from the French as well as from our Government all knowledge of his intention to endeavour to extort from the Sultan an engagement giving to Russia the protectorate of the Greek Church in Turkey. The Cabinets of the Western Powers were suffered to gather the first tidings of this scheme from their Constantinople despatches, and the trust which the English Government had hitherto placed in the honour and good faith of the Emperor Nicholas was suddenly and for ever destroyed.

Mentschikoff's demands.

Meanwhile Prince Mentschikoff brought forward the claims of the Greek Church in regard to the Holy Places, but he seemed disposed to be moderate in his demands respecting the shrines, if the Turkish Government should show any willingness to give way to him in regard to the other and more important object which he was to endeavour to compass. Striving to take advantage of the alarm created by his Embassy, he proposed to wring from the Porte a treaty engagement, conceding to the Emperor of Russia a protectorate over the Greek Church in Turkey. At first he spoke darkly, intimating that he had some great demand to press upon the Sultan, but not yet choosing to say what the demand might be. Then he began to say to the Turkish Ministers that if they would appease the anger of the Czar, and deliver their State from danger, it would be well for them at once to turn away from France and England, trust themselves wholly to the

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generosity of the Emperor of Russia, and begin by giving a solemn assurance that they would withhold from the representatives of the Western Powers all knowledge of the negotiation which they were required to undertake. "We are aware," said the Grand Vizier, "that the object of his (Prince "Mentschikoff's) mission is to make a secret treaty "of alliance with us. He has not demanded it offi- "cially, but he has told some persons in his confi- "dence, who (he knows) are in communication with "us, that we do wrong to rely on the English and "French Governments, for experience should at "length have proved to us that we have lost much "and gained nothing by following their policy and "advice. By this language he seeks to gain their "support and to insure their concurrence in the "work of the secret treaty which he is seeking to "conclude. His policy is most confused. At one "time he would attract us to Russia by mildness, "spreading abroad a report that the intentions of his "Government are pacific. At another time he seeks "to gain us over by pointing out the disadvantages "and inutility of our reliance upon England and "France, and how wrong we are in following the "advice of those two Powers, to whom we ought "not to be attached, especially if we consider that "the nature of their Constitution differs from that of "ours, which, on the contrary, resembles that of "Russia and Austria. Prince Mentschikoff had a "conference with Rifaat Pasha two days ago. He

"told him that before communicating to the Sublime "Porte the nature of his mission, and the demands "of his Government, and before giving any expla- "nation, he required from Rifaat Pasha the formal "promise of the Porte, that it would not communi- "cate to the representative either of England or of "France anything whatever as to what he demanded "or proposed; that it was his wish that it should be "treated with the greatest secrecy, otherwise he "would not enter upon the subject."*

The Grand Vizier declared that the Turkish Government had at once refused to withhold from the Western Powers a knowledge of the impending negotiation, but it seems likely that some alarmed member of the Turkish Government may have been led to give the required promise of secrecy, for before the end of March Prince Mentschikoff vouchsafed to disclose the offers and the demands of his Sovereign. He verbally expressed the Emperor's wish to enter into a secret treaty with Turkey, putting a fleet and 400,000 men at her disposal if she ever needed aid against any Western Power. As "the equivalent for this proffered aid," said the Grand Vizier, "Russia further secretly demanded an "addition to the treaty of Kainardji, whereby the "Greek Church should be placed entirely under "Russian protection without reference to Turkey. "Prince Mentschikoff had stated that the greatest

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 111.

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"secrecy must be maintained relative to this propo-
"sition, and that, should Turkey allow it to be
"made known to England, he and his mission would
"instantly quit Constantinople."*

This kind of pressure upon the Turkish Government was perhaps well fitted for the days of alarm which immediately followed Prince Mentschikoff's arrival at Constantinople; but it was now the end of March, and it was so long ago as the 6th of the month that Colonel Rose, by requesting the English Admiral to come into the Levant, had been able to stop the panic. Rifaat Pasha, the Minister who had succeeded to Fuad Effendi in the Department of Foreign Affairs, was firm. "I am not a child," said he, in his message to Colonel Rose; "I am an old
"Minister, very well acquainted with the treaties
"which unite the Sublime Porte with the friendly
"Powers; and I understand, God be praised! too
"well the importance of our good relations with
"England and France, the full weight of the obli-
"gation to maintain treaties, the whole extent of the
"evil which would result to my Government if it
"departs from or infringes them, to hesitate a single
"instant to inform their respective representatives of
"every demand or proposal which Russia might be
"desirous of enforcing upon us, and which might
"not be in accordance with the rights recorded in
"those treaties."**

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 112.

** Ibid., part i. p. 114.

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Finding himself thus encountered, and being unskilled in negotiation, Prince Mentschikoff had already begun to draw to himself the support of an army. The English Vice-Consul at Galatz reported that preparations had been made in Bessarabia for the passage of 120,000 men, and that battalions were marching to the South from all directions. Though the time of mere panic was past, there was "anxiety and alarm" in the Divan.*

But Prince Mentschikoff was destined soon to learn that there was a power in the world which could exert more governance over Turkish Statesmen than the march of the Czar's battalions. Before the week was past he had to undergo the sensation of encountering a formidable mind.

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 124.

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Foreign "influence."

WHEN a great country is induced, by virtue or by policy, to refrain from using her physical strength against the Sovereign of a weaker State, she often solaces herself for this painful effort of moderation by showing her neighbour the error of his ways and giving him constant advice; and if it happen that two or more great Powers are thus engaged in tendering their rival counsels to the same State, they will be prone to struggle with one another for the ascendancy, and to do this with a zeal scarcely intelligible to men who have never seen that kind of strife. The prize contended for is commonly known by the name of "influence;" and although this moral sovereignty over foreign States may be a privilege of small intrinsic worth, the Princes and Statesmen who have once begun combating for the prize, and even the merchants and the travellers who have happened to be on the spot, and to witness with any attention the animating incidents of the conflict, have generally had their zeal kindled. Now the Ottoman polity is of such a nature as almost to court this kind of interference. The practice of suffering the Christian Churches to live and thrive separate and apart

Grounds for foreign interference in Turkey.

without being subjected to any attempt at amalgamation, has given to these communities so many of the privileges of distinct national existence that they long to make their independence still more complete, and to do this — not by attempting to lay their timid hands upon the government, but rather by becoming more and more separate, and at last dropping off from the Empire. Therefore, instead of harbouring schemes for rising in arms against the Sultan, they have accustomed themselves to seek to form ties of a political and religious kind with foreign States, and to appeal to them for protection against their Ottoman rulers. Here then, of course, a gaping cleft was open to receive the wedge which diplomatists call a "Protec-"torate." Russia claimed a moral right to protect the ten or fourteen millions of Turkish subjects who constituted the Greek Church, and she availed herself of some loose words which had crept into the old treaty of Kainardji as a ground for maintaining that this moral claim was converted into a distinct right by treaty engagement. Austria, armed with treaties, was empowered to protect the Roman Catholic worship, but France had always been accustomed to busy herself in watching over that portion of the Latin Church which was connected with Palestine and Syria. It is true that the Armenian, the Coptic, and the Black Churches were without any recognised foreign patron, and flourished quite as well as their protected brethren; but the numbers composing these Churches were scanty in comparison with the wor-

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shippers following the Greek ritual; and it may be said that the bulk of the Christian population of Turkey had contracted the habit of looking abroad for support.

Again, the Turkish Government was always so sensible of the distinctness of the "nations" held under its sway, and of the hardship of keeping Christians under the close subjection of the Moslem system, that even in the times when the Sultans were in the pride of their strength they generously allowed humble foreigners, though living in Turkey, to have the protection of their country's flag, and to enjoy immunities which (except in the case of Sovereigns and their embassies) the Governments of Christian countries have never been accustomed to give to any of their foreign guests. These privileges had been granted to the principal States of Europe by treaty engagements which went by the name of "capitulations;" and they were so extensive that, except in regard to one or two specified descriptions of crime and outrage, a foreigner in Turkey who was a native of any of the States to whom these capitulations had been granted, was exempt from the laws of the country in which he dwelt. And these privileges were not even confined to foreigners, for Ambassadors at the Porte claimed and exercised a right of withdrawing a Turkish subject from the laws of his country by taking him into their service, or even by a mere written grant of protection; and the streets of Pera and Galata were filled with

Orientals of various races who had contrived to be turned into "Russians," or "Frenchmen," or "Englishmen." Thus it resulted that not only the great communities forming Churches or "nations," but also a great number of individuals, often clever, stirring, and unscrupulous men, were always labouring to attract the interference of some great Power, furnishing it with ready grounds of dispute, and stimulating its desire for preponderance. But there was a broad difference between the protectorate of Russia and that of the other States of Europe; for whilst the Roman Catholic States could only reckon a few hundred thousand of clients, and whilst the Protestant subjects of the Porte were too few to form a body in the State, the number of Greek Christians who looked to Russia for protection amounted to from ten to fourteen millions. This fact gave great strength and substance to the pretensions of Russia, but, on the other hand, it made her interference in a high degree dangerous; for it was clear that if the guardianship of so vast a number of the Rayahs or Turkish subjects were to be suffered to lapse into the hands of a foreign Sovereign, the empire of the Sultans would pass away. All the great Powers of Europe were accustomed to press upon the Sultan the duty of conferring upon his people, and especially upon his Christian subjects, the blessing of good and equal government, but Russia urged these demands with the not unnatural desire to prepare for herself a firm standing-ground

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in the midst of her neighbour's territory; whilst Austria and England, being interested in averting the dismemberment of the Sultan's dominions, gave their counsel with a real view to make the Sultan do what they deemed to be for his own good.

Rivalry between Nicholas and Sir Stratford Canning.

For ascendancy on this the favourite arena of diplomacy two men had long contended. They were altogether unequal in station, and yet were not ill matched. The first of the combatants was the Emperor Nicholas, the other was Sir Stratford Canning.

Sir Stratford Canning.

This kinsman of Mr Canning the Minister had been bred from early life to the career of diplomacy, and whilst he was so young that he could still perhaps think in smooth Eton Alcäics more easily than in the diction of "High Contracting Parties," it was given him to negotiate a treaty which helped to bring ruin upon the enemy of his country.* How to negotiate with a perfected skill never degenerating into craft, how to form such a scheme of policy that his country might be brought to adopt it without swerving, and how to pursue this always, promoting it steadily abroad, and gradually forcing the Home Government to go all lengths in its support, this he knew; and he was, moreover, so gifted by nature, that whether men studied his despatches, or whether they listened to his spoken words, or whether they were only by-

* The Treaty of Bucharest in 1812. By enabling the Czar to withdraw from the South the forces commanded by Tchitchagoff, this treaty did much to convert the discomfiture of Napoleon's "Grand Army" into absolute ruin.

standers caught and fascinated by the grace of his presence, they could scarcely help thinking that if the English nation was to be maintained in peace or drawn into war by the will of a single mortal, there was no man who looked so worthy to fix its destiny as Sir Stratford Canning. He had faults which made him an imperfect Christian, for his temper was fierce, and his assertion of self was so closely involved in his conflicts that he followed up his opinions with his feelings, and with the whole strength of his imperious nature. But his fierce temper, being always under control when purposes of State so required, was far from being an infirmity, and was rather a weapon of exceeding sharpness, for it was so wielded by him as to have more tendency to cause dread and surrender than to generate resistance. Then, too, every judgment which he pronounced was enfolded in words so complete as to exclude the idea that it could ever be varied, and to convey, therefore, the idea of duration. As though yielding to fate itself, the Turkish mind used to bend and fall down before him.

But the counsels which Sir Stratford Canning had been accustomed to tender to the Sultan's Ministers, however wholesome they might be, were often very irksome to hear, and very difficult to adopt. Indeed it might be questioned whether his Turkish policy could be made to consist with the principle on which the Ottoman system was based. He sought to make the Ottoman rule seem tolerable to Christendom by

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getting rid of the differences which separated the Christian subjects of the Porte from their Mahometan fellow-subjects, and placing the tributaries on a footing with their masters. But the theory of Mahometan government rests upon the maintenance of a clear separation from the unbelievers, and to propose to a Mussulman of any piety that the Commander of the Faithful should obliterate the distinction between Mahometans and Christians, would be proposing to obliterate the distinction between virtue and vice; the notion would seem to be not merely wrong and wicked, but a contradiction in terms. A virtuous Osmanlee would feel that, if he were to consent to this levelling of the barriers between good and evil, he would lose the whole merit and comfort of being a Turk. Perhaps the opposite policy — namely, that of widening the separation of the Christians, and giving them (under a tenure less precarious than the present one) the character of tributary municipalities — would be more consonant with the scheme of a Mussulman Empire, and therefore more susceptible of complete execution. But whether the reforms thus counselled were possible or not, it was hard to resist the imperious Ambassador to his face. If what he directed was inconsistent with the nature of things, then possibly the nature of things would be changed by the decree of Heaven, for there was no hope that the great Eltchi would relax his will. In the mean time, however, and by the blessing of God, the actual execution of the Ambassador's painful mandates might

perhaps be suffered to encounter a little delay. So thought, so temporised, the wise tranquil statesmen at the Porte.

Of course this kind of ascendancy was often very galling to the Sultan's advisers. They knew that the English Ambassador was counselling them for the good of their country; but they felt that he humbled them by making his dictation too plainly apparent, and they were often very conscious that the motive which made them succumb to him was dread. Yet, if the Ambassador was unrelenting and even harsh in the exercise of his dominion over the Turks, he was faithful to guard them against enemies from abroad. He chastened them himself, but he was dangerous to any other man who came seeking to hurt his children.

Now it happened that this was exactly the kind of ascendancy over the Turks for which the Emperor Nicholas had long been craving. Some men imagine that the Emperor's designs in regard to Turkey were steadily governed by sheer desire for his neighbour's land; and they are not without specious materials for forming such an opinion: but perhaps a full knowledge of the truth would justify the belief that, from the Peace of Adrianople in 1829 down to the time of his death, the Czar would have preferred the ascendancy which Sir Stratford Canning enjoyed at Constantinople to any scheme of conquest. And, what is more, if Nicholas had succeeded in gaining this ascendancy, he would have been inclined to use

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it as a means of enforcing counsels somewhat similar to those which were pressed upon the Sultan by the English Ambassador; for though his first care would have been always for his own Church, it would have suited his pride and his policy to extend his protection to all the Christian subjects of the Porte. But just as similarity of doctrine often embitters the differences between contending sects, so the very resemblance between his and Sir Stratford Canning's views with regard to the Christian subjects of the Porte made it the more intolerable to him to see that he, the powerful neighbour of Turkey, who was able to hover over her frontiers and her shores with great armies and fleets, could never make an effort to force his counsels on the Porte without finding himself baffled or forestalled by the stronger mind.

Even in his very early life it had been the fate of Sir Stratford Canning to have to resist and thwart the Russian Government; and during a great part of the years of his embassy at Constantinople he had been more or less in a posture of resistance to the Emperor Nicholas. Moreover, the feeling with which the Emperor carried on this long-standing conflict was quickened by personal animosity, and by a knowledge that diplomacy was watching the strife with interest and amusement; for he had once gone the length of declining to receive Sir Stratford Canning as the English Ambassador at St Petersburg, and had thus marked him out before Europe as his recognised antagonist. The struggle had lasted for a long time,

and with varying success; for many a Turkish ministry owed its frail existence and its untimely end to the chances of the combat going on between the Czar and the English Ambassador. The Turks could not help knowing that the counsels of the Ambassador were for their own good, and they had reason to surmise that the advice of the Emperor might spring from opposite motives; but there are times when the smooth speech and the wily promises of a political foe are more welcome than the painful lectures of an honest friend; and again, though it was hard to bear up with mere words against the personal ascendant of the Ambassador, the Emperor had the power of throwing the sword into the scale at any moment. The strife, therefore, had not been altogether unequal; but, upon the whole, Sir Stratford Canning had kept the upper hand, and the Czar had been forced to endure the agony of being what his representative called "secondary," so long as Sir Stratford Canning was in the palace of the English Embassy.

Lord Stratford instructed to return to Constantinople.

For almost two years Sir Stratford Canning had been absent from Constantinople; but now, at a time when Europe had fastened its eyes upon the Czar, and was watching to see how the Ambassador of All the Russias would impose his master's will upon Turkey, the Emperor Nicholas was obliged to hear that his eternal foe, travelling by the ominous route of Paris and Vienna, was slowly returning to his embassy at the Porte.

His instructions.

It was on the 25th of February 1853 that Lord

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Stratford de Redcliffe* was instructed to return to his former post. The measure was not without significance. Read by foreigners, it imported that England clung to her ancient policy, and was proceeding to maintain it; and although the instructions addressed to Lord Stratford disclosed no knowledge of the spirit in which Prince Mentschikoff was about to conduct his embassy, or of the kind of proposals which he was about to press upon the Porte, they indicated that the Cabinet was alarmed for the fate of Turkey.

The despatch which supplied Lord Stratford with his instructions, announced to him that, in the then critical period of the fate of the Ottoman Empire, he was to return to his Embassy at Constantinople for a special purpose. Then, after recording once more the fact that the duty of maintaining the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire was a principle solemnly declared and acknowledged by all the great Powers of Europe, the despatch informed Lord Stratford that it was his mission to counsel prudence to the Porte, and forbearance to those Powers who were urging compliance with their demands. In Paris he was to remind the French Government that the interests of France and England in the East were identical, and was to explain the fatal embarrassment to which the Sultan might be exposed if unduly pressed by France upon a question of such vital im-

* Sir Stratford Canning was created Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe in 1852.

portance to the Power from which Turkey had most to apprehend. At Vienna he was to give and elicit fresh declarations of the conservative views entertained by the two Governments. Then, proceeding to Constantinople, the Ambassador was to inform the Sultan that his Embassy was to be regarded as a mark of Her Majesty's friendly feelings towards His Highness, but also as indicating the opinion which Her Majesty entertained of the gravity of the circumstances in which there was reason to fear the Ottoman Empire was placed. In regard to any part which he might be able to take in conducing to a settlement of the question of the Holy Places, the discretion of the Ambassador was left unfettered. The Ambassador was directed to warn the Porte that the Ottoman Empire was in "a position of peculiar "danger. The accumulated grievances of foreign "nations," continued Lord Clarendon, "which the "Porte is unable or unwilling to redress; the mal-"administration of its own affairs, and the increasing "weakness of executive power in Turkey, have caused "the allies of the Porte latterly to assume a tone "alike novel and alarming, and which, if persevered "in, may lead to a general revolt among the Christian "subjects of the Porte, and prove fatal to the inde-"pendence and integrity of the Empire — a ca-"tastrophe that would be deeply deplored by Her "Majesty's Government, but which it is their duty to "represent to the Porte is considered probable and "impending by some of the great European Powers.

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"Your Excellency will explain to the Sultan that it "is with the object of pointing out these dangers, "and with the hope of averting them, that Her "Majesty's Government have now directed you to "proceed to Constantinople. You will endeavour to "convince the Sultan and his Ministers that the "crisis is one which requires the utmost prudence "on their part, and confidence in the sincerity and "soundness of the advice they will receive from "you, to resolve it favourably for their future peace "and independence." Then (and probably at the suggestion of Lord Stratford himself) the Ambassador was to press upon the Porte the adoption of the reforms which his intimate knowledge of the affairs of Turkey enabled him to recommend; and then, disclosing the effect already produced upon the mind of the Government by the challenge to which our accustomed policy in the East had just been subjected by the press, the despatch went on: — "Nor will you "disguise from the Sultan and his Ministers that per- "severance in his present course must end in alien- "ating the sympathies of the British nation, and "making it impossible for Her Majesty's Government "to shelter them from the impending danger, or to "overlook the exigencies of Christendom, exposed to "the natural consequences of their unwise policy "and reckless maladministration." Finally, the Ambassador was told that, in the event of imminent danger to the existence of the Turkish Government, he was to despatch a messenger at once to Malta,

requesting the Admiral to hold himself in readiness; but Lord Stratford was not to direct him to approach the Dardanelles without positive instructions from the Government at home.

Thus, so far as concerned the power of turning for aid to physical force, the Ambassador went out poorly armed; but he was destined to have an opportunity of showing that a slender authority in the hands of a skilled diplomatist may be more formidable than the absolute control of great armaments intrusted to a less able Statesman. Lord Stratford was licensed to do no more than send a message to an Admiral, advising him to be ready to go to sea; and, slight as this power was, he never exhausted it; yet, as will be seen, he so wielded the instruction which intrusted it to him as to be able to establish a great calm in the Divan at a moment when Prince Mentschikoff was violently pressing upon its fears, with a fleet awaiting his orders, and an army of 140,000 men.

CHAPTER IX.

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Lord Stratford's return.

On the morning of the 5th of April 1853, the Sultan and all his Ministers learned that a vessel of war was coming up the Propontis, and they knew who it was that was on board. Long before noon the voyage and the turmoil of the reception were over, and, except that a frigate under the English flag lay at anchor in the Golden Horn, there was no seeming change in the outward world. Yet all was changed. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe had entered once more the palace of the English Embassy. The event spread a sense of safety, but also a sense of awe. It seemed to bring with it confusion to the enemies of Turkey, but austere reproof for past errors at home, and punishment where punishment was due, and an enforcement of hard toils and painful sacrifices of many kinds, and a long farewell to repose. It was the angry return of a king whose realm had been suffered to fall into danger. Before a day was over, the Grand Vizier and the Reis Effendi had begun to speak, and to tell a part of what they knew to the English Ambassador. They did not yet venture to tell all. Things which they had

told to Colonel Rose they did not yet dare to tell to the great Eltchi. They did not, perhaps, mean to conceal from him, but they shrank from the terror of seeing his anger when he came to know of Prince Mentschikoff's demands for a Protectorate of the Greek Church. If they were to confess that they had borne to hear such a proposal, the Eltchi might think that they had dared to listen to it. Lord Stratford, observing their fear, imagined that it was Prince Mentschikoff who had disturbed their equanimity. "This combination," said he, "of alarm, "seeking for advice, and of reluctance to intrust "me frankly with the whole case, is attributable to "the threatening language of Prince Mentschikoff, "and to the character of his proposals." But his view of the cause of this tendency towards suppression is displaced by observing the frankness of the disclosures which the Turkish Ministers had long before made to Colonel Rose:* the truth is that Lord Stratford was unconscious of exercising the ascendancy which he did, and, imagining that men gave way to him because he was in the right, he never came to understand the awe which he inspired. However, by degrees the Turkish Ministers went so far as to tell him that "since the arrival of Prince Men- "tschikoff, the language held by the Russian Embassy "to them had been a mixture of angry complaints

* "Eastern Papers," part I. p. 107 *et seq.*

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"and friendly assurances, accompanied with positive "requisitions as to the Holy Places in Palestine, in- "dications of some ulterior views, and a general tone "of insistence bordering at times on intimidation." * They declared that as to what the ulterior views were, "there was still some uncertainty in the language "of Prince Mentschikoff. In the beginning he had "sounded the sentiments of the Porte as to a defensive "alliance with Russia, but, receiving no encourage- "ment, had desisted from the overture. His inten- "tions were now rather directed to a remodelling of "the Greek Patriarchate of Constantinople, to a more "clear and comprehensive definition of Russian right "under treaty to protect the Greek and Armenian "subjects of the Porte in religious matters, and to "the conclusion of a formal agreement comprising "those points." Then, eager to place themselves under Lord Stratford's guidance, but still shrinking from a disclosure of the whole truth, the Turkish Ministers entreated the Ambassador to tell them how to meet the demands which, although they only spoke of them hypothetically, had been already made by Prince Mentschikoff.

His plan of resistance to Mentschikoff's demands.

Lord Stratford instantly saw that he must cause the question of the Holy Places to be kept clear of all the other subjects of discussion which Prince Mentschikoff might be intending to raise, for it was

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 125.

plain that the vacillation of the Porte in regard to the sanctuaries (though it had sprung from a desire to avoid giving offence to either of two great Powers) had given Russia fair grounds of complaint on that subject; but the Czar had nothing else to complain of, and it was clear, therefore, that if the one grievance which really existed could be settled, every hostile step which Russia might afterwards take would place her more and more in the wrong. "Endeavour," said Lord Stratford, in charging the Turkish Ministers, "to keep the affair of the Holy "Places separate from the ulterior proposals (what-"ever they may be) of Russia. The course which "you appear to have taken under the former head "was probably the best, and I am glad to find that "there is a fair prospect of its success. Whenever "Prince Mentschikoff comes forward with further "propositions, you are at perfect liberty to decline "entering into negotiation without a full statement "of their nature, extent, and reasons. Should they "be found on examination to carry with them that "degree of influence over the Christian subjects of "the Porte in favour of a foreign Power which "might eventually prove dangerous or seriously in-"convenient to the exercise of the Sultan's legiti-"mate authority, His Majesty's Ministers cannot be "doing wrong in declining them." But then, added the Ambassador — and his words portended some counsels hard to follow — this "will not pre-

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"vent the removal by direct sovereign authority of "any existing abuse."*

Gradually the Turkish Ministers told more, and on the 9th of April Lord Stratford knew that Russia was demanding a treaty engagement, giving her the protectorate of the Greek Church in Turkey; and being now in communication with Prince Mentschikoff, he succeeded, as he believed, in penetrating the real object which Russia had in view. "That "object," he said, "was to reinstate Russian influence "in Turkey on an exclusive basis, and in a com- "manding and stringent form." In other words, Prince Mentschikoff, with horse and foot and artillery and the whole Sebastopol fleet at his back, was come to depose the man whom they called in St Petersburg "the English Sultan." On the other hand, Lord Stratford was not willing to be deposed. The struggle began.

Commencement of the struggle between Prince Mentschikoff and Lord Stratford.

The severance of the question of the Holy Places from the ulterior demands of the Czar was not an object to be pursued for the sake of order and convenience only. On the contrary, it bade fair to govern the result of the diplomatic conflict; for the Montenegro question having disappeared, and Russia having committed herself to the avowal that she had no complaints against the Sultan except in regard to the Holy Places, a settlement of that solitary grievance

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 125.

would leave the ulterior demand so baseless that any attempt to enforce it by arms would be a naked outrage upon the opinion of Europe. If Prince Mentschikoff had been a man accustomed to negotiate, he would have taken care to preserve the question of the Holy Places, and keep it blended with the ulterior demand until he saw his way to a successful issue; for he was in the position of having to found two demands upon one grievance, and it was clear, therefore, that he would be stranded if he allowed his one grievance to be disposed of without having good reason for knowing that his further demand would be granted; but he was vain and confident, and perhaps his sagacity was blunted by the thought that he was able to threaten an appeal to force. Moreover, Prince Mentschikoff was in the hands of a practised adversary.

Lord Stratford, knowing the full import of the decision towards which he was leading his opponent, did not fail to deal with him tenderly; and for several days the Prince had the satisfaction of imagining that the imperious and overbearing Englishman of whom they were always talking at St Petersburg was become very gentle in his presence. The two Ambassadors, without being yet in negotiation, began to talk with one another of the matters which were bringing the peace of the world into danger. They spoke of the Holy Places. Far from seeming to be hard or scornful in regard to that matter, Lord Stratford was full of deference to a cause which, whether

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it were founded on error or on truth, was still the honest heart's desire of fifty millions of pious men. He showed by his language that if by chance he should be called upon to use his good offices in this matter, or to mediate between Russia and France, he would form his judgment with gravity and with care. Where he could do so with justice, he admitted the fairness of the Russian claims.

Prince Mentschikoff's tone became "considerably "softened."* Then the Ambassadors ventured upon the subject still more pregnant with danger, for Lord Stratford now disclosed his knowledge of Prince Mentschikoff's "ulterior propositions relative to the "protectorate of the whole Greek Church and the "priesthood in Turkey, and his conviction that they "would meet with serious opposition from the Porte, "and be regarded with little favour by Powers even "the most friendly to Russia."** Prince Mentschikoff tried to "attenuate the extent and effect"*** of his demands; and, on the other hand, Lord Stratford "drew a clear line of distinction between the confir- "mation of special points already stipulated by treaty, "and an extension of influence having the virtual "force of a protectorate, to be exercised exclusively "by a single foreign Power, over the most important "and numerous class of the Sultan's tributary sub- "jects;"*** but by common consent the two Ambas-

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 134.
** Ibid. p. 151.
*** Ibid. p. 139.

sadors "avoided entering into a discussion which might "have proved irritating upon this question."* Prince Mentschikoff, however, committed the diplomatic error of intimating "that, notwithstanding the great "importance attached to it by his Government, there "was no danger of any hostile aggression as the re- "sult of its failure, but at most an estrangement be- "tween the two Courts, and perhaps, though it was not "so said, an interruption of diplomatic relations."*

That in these circumstances, and until he had succeeded in separating the question of the Holy Places, it was right for the English Ambassador to deal very temperately with the ulterior demands of the Czar, no diplomatist would doubt; and Lord Stratford acknowledges** that he carefully refrained from discussing the subject in a way tending to irritate, but the Russians imagine that he did more than abstain. They say that having been supplied with a copy of Prince Mentschikoff's draft of the convention, embodying his demands in respect to the Greek Church and Clergy, Lord Stratford struck out as inadmissible the clauses relating to the Greek Patriarch's tenure of office, and sending back the draft with that and with no other alteration, induced the Turkish Ministers (and through them induced the Russian Embassy) to suppose that he entertained no objection to the proposed convention except that which he had indicated by his erasure; and that

* "Eastern Papers," part i p. 139.

** Ibid. p. 134.

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Prince Mentschikoff, being in this belief, and being prepared to give way upon the question of the Greek Patriarch, had a right to expect Lord Stratford's acquiescence in that dangerous part of the Czar's demand which sought to establish a Protectorate over the Greek Church in Turkey. Nothing is more likely than that, in the process of endeavouring to penetrate Lord Stratford's intentions through the medium of the Turkish Ministers, Prince Mentschikoff may have received a wrong impression, and it is very likely that Lord Stratford in reading the draft may have at once struck out clauses which he regarded as totally inadmissible, reserving for separate discussion and for oral explanation the consideration of an ambiguous clause which, dangerous as it was, might easily be so altered as to become entirely harmless; but it is certain that there was never a moment in which Lord Stratford was willing or even would have endured that any Protectorate over the Greek Church in Turkey should be ceded to Russia;* and no one versed in the spirit of English diplomacy, or having a just conception of Lord Stratford's nature, will be able to accept the belief that the Queen's Ambassador intended to overreach his antagonist by any misleading contrivance.

But whatever may have been the clue which led him into the wrong path, Prince Mentschikoff failed to see the danger in which he would place the suc-

* See Lord Stratford's Despatches, ibid. p. 127 *et seq.* to 151.

cess of his negotiation if he consented to let the question of the Holy Places be treated separately; and the angry despatches which now came in from St Petersburg* did not tend to divert him from his error. On the contrary, they tended to place him in hostility with France more distinctly than before; and since the question of the Holy Places was the one in which France and Russia were face to face, the Czar's Ambassador was not perhaps unwilling to enter upon a course which would place him for the time in distinct antagonism with France, and with France alone. He agreed to allow the question of the Holy Places to be treated first and apart from his other demands.

It must be acknowledged that, so far as concerned the question of the Holy Places, the demands made by Russia were moderate. Notwithstanding all the heat of his sectarian zeal, the Emperor Nicholas had seen that to endeavour to enforce a withdrawal of the privileges which had been granted with public solemnity to the Latin Church would be to outrage Catholic Europe; and it may be believed, too, that his religious feeling made him unwilling to exclude the people of other creeds from those Holy Sites which, according to the teaching of his own Church, it was good for Christians to embrace. But if the demands of the Russian Emperor in regard to the Holy Places were fair and moderate,

* 13th April.

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he was resolved to be peremptory in enforcing them. And it seemed to him that in this matter he could not fail to have the ascendant, for his forces were near at hand. Also he had good right to suppose that France would be isolated, for it was not to be believed that England or any other Power would take a part or even acknowledge the slightest interest in a question between two sorts of monks.

On the other hand, the violent language of M. de Lavalette, his threats, the persistence of the French Government, and the advance of the Toulon fleet to the Bay of Salamis, — all these signs seemed to exclude the expectation that the French Government would easily give way. Here was an error. Zealous himself, the Russian Ambassador imagined a zeal in the Government and the Church to which he was opposing himself, and fancied that he saw in the French Ambassador's "resistance a proof of the en-"croaching spirit of that Church which proclaims it-"self universal, and looked for its real cause in the "unceasing desire of the same Church to extend the "sphere of its action."* He failed to see that his French antagonist might suddenly smile and throw off the cause of the Latin Church, and so rob the Czar of the signal triumph on which he was reckoning by the process of mere concession.

But whilst, to the common judgment of men who watched this haughty Embassy, it seemed that the

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 139.

Czar, in all the pride of strength and firm purpose, was descending on his prey, he was fulfilling the utmost hope of the patient enemy in the West, who had long pursued him with a stealthy joy, and was now keenly marking him down.

CHAPTER X.

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State of the dispute respecting the Holy Places.

MEANTIME the course of events affecting the question of the Holy Places had shifted the grounds of dispute; for the solemn act performed at Bethlehem in the foregoing December had converted the claims of the Latins into established privileges; and the Emperor Nicholas, notwithstanding his religious excitement, had still enough wisdom to see that, although he might have been able to prevent this result by a violent use of his power at an earlier period, he could not now undo what was done. Without outraging Catholic Europe, and even, it may be believed, his own sense of religious propriety, he could not now wrench the key of the Bethlehem Church from the hands of the Latin monks, nor tear down the silver star from the Holy Stable of the Nativity. Therefore all that Prince Mentschikoff demanded in regard to the key and the star was a declaration by the Turkish Government that the delivery of the key implied no ownership over the principal altar of the Church; that no change should be made in the system of the religious ceremonies or the hours of service; that the guardianship of the Great Gate

should always be intrusted to a Greek priest; and, finally, that the silver star should be deemed to be a gift coming from the mere generosity of the Sultan, and conferring no sort of new rights.* In regard to the shrine of the Blessed Virgin at Gethsemane, Prince Mentschikoff required that the Greeks should have precedence at her tomb. He also insisted that the gardens of the Church of Bethlehem should remain in the joint guardianship of the Greeks and the Latins; and in demanding that some buildings which overlooked the terraces of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre should be pulled down, he required that the site of these buildings should never become the property of any "nation," but be walled off and kept apart as neutral ground. This last demand is curious. The Russian Government felt that even at Jerusalem it would be well to set apart one small shred of ground, and keep it free from the strife of the Churches.

But the last of Prince Mentschikoff's demands in regard to the Holy Places was the one most hard to solve. It has been said that in comparing the ways of men in the East with the ways of men in the West, there are found many subjects on which their views are not merely different, but opposite. One of these is the business of repairing churches. Whilst the English Churchmen were contending that they ought not to be laden with the whole

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 129.

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burthen of keeping their sacred buildings in repair, the Christians in Palestine were willing to set the world in flames for the sake of maintaining their rival claims to the honour of repairing churches. The cupola of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem was out of order. The Greeks, supported by Russia, claimed the right to repair it. The Latins denied their right. The dispute raged. Then, as usual, the wise and decorous Turk stepped in between the combatants, and said he would repair the Church himself. This did not content the Greeks, and Prince Mentschikoff now demanded that the ancient rights of the Greeks to repair the great Cupola and Church at Jerusalem should be recognised and confirmed; and although he did not reject the Sultan's offer to supply the means for the repairs, he insisted that the work should be under the control of the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem.*

Some of these demands were resisted by France; and although M. de Lavalette had been long since recalled, M. de la Cour, who succeeded him, seemed inclined to be somewhat persistent, especially in regard to the question of the Cupola and the question of precedence at the Tomb of the Blessed Virgin.

It seems probable, however, that although M. de la Cour may have been sufficiently supplied with instructions touching the immediate question in hand, he had not perceived so clearly as his English col-

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 129.

league the dawn of the new French policy. From the communications of his own Government before he crossed the Channel, from his sojourn at Paris, and from the tenor of the despatches from England, Lord Stratford had gathered means of inferring that France no longer intended to keep herself apart from England by persisting in her pressure upon the Sultan; and, supposing that she had made up her mind to enter upon this new policy, Lord Stratford might well entertain a hope that the question whether a Greek priest should be allowed to control the repair of a Cupola at Jerusalem, or whether the doorkeeper of a Church should be a Greek or a Latin, would not be fought with undue obstinacy by the quickwitted countrymen of Voltaire. He spoke with M. de la Cour, and found that he was prepared for concession, if matters could be so arranged as to satisfy what Lord Stratford, in his haughty and almost zoological way, liked to call "French feelings "of honour."*

Lord Stratford's measures for settling it.

By means of his communications with the Turks, the English Ambassador easily ascertained the points on which Prince Mentschikoff might be expected to be inexorable. These were: — the repair of the Cupola, the question of precedence at the Tomb of the Virgin, and the question about the Greek doorkeeper in the Church of Bethlehem. Furnished with this clue, Lord Stratford saw M. de

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 134.

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la Cour, and dissuaded him from committing himself to a determined resistance on any of these three questions. He also gave his French colleague to understand that, in his opinion, the Greek pretension upon these three points stood on strong ground, and urged him to bear in mind the great European interests at stake, the declared moderation of the French Government, and the triumph already achieved by France in regard to the key and the silver star. And then Lord Stratford gave M. de la Cour a pleasing glimpse of the discomfiture into which their Russian colleague would be thrown if only the question of the Holy Places could be settled.* The French Ambassador soon began to enter into the spirit of these counsels.

On the other hand, Prince Mentschikoff was also willing to dispose of this question of the Holy Places; for he had now seen enough to be aware that he would not encounter sufficient resistance upon this matter to give him either a signal triumph or a tenable ground of rupture, and the angry despatches which he was receiving from St Petersburg made him impatient to press forward his ulterior demand. The two contending negotiators being thus disposed, it was soon found that the hindrances which prevented their coming to terms were very slender. But it often happens that the stress which a common man lays upon any subject of dispute is

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 155.

proportioned to the energy which he has spent in dealing with it, rather than to the real magnitude of the question itself; and when Prince Mentschikoff and M. de la Cour seemed to be approaching to a settlement, they allowed their minds to become once again so much heated by the strenuous discussions of small matters that "the difficulty of settling the "question of the Holy Places threatened to increase. "The French and Russian Ambassadors insisted on "their respective pretensions, while the Porte in- "clined but hesitated to assume the reponsibility of "deciding between them."* Then, at last, the hour was ripe for the intervention of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. "I thought," said he, "it was time for "me to adopt a more prominent part in reconciling "the adverse parties."

He was more than equal to the task. Being by nature so grave and stately as to be able to refrain from a smile without effort and even without design, he prevented the vain and presumptuous Russian from seeing the minuteness and inanity of the things which he was gaining by his violent attempt at diplomacy. For the Greek Patriarch to be authorised to watch the mending of a dilapidated roof — for the Greek votaries to have the first hour of the day at a tomb — and, finally, for the doorkeeper of a church to be always a Greek, though without

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 157.

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any right of keeping out his opponents, — these things might be trifles, but awarded to All the Russias through the stately mediation of the English Ambassador, they seemed to gain in size and majesty; and for the moment, perhaps, the sensations of the Prince were nearly the same as though he were receiving the surrender of a province or the engagements of a great alliance. On the other hand, Lord Stratford was unfailing in his deference to the motives of action which he had classed under the head of "French feelings of honour;" and if M. de la Cour was set on fire by the thought that at the Tomb of the Virgin, or anywhere else, the Greek priests were to perform their daily worship before the hour appointed for the services of the Church which looked to France for support, Lord Stratford was there to explain, in his grand quiet way, that the priority proposed to be given to the Greeks was a priority resulting from the habit of early prayer which obtained in Oriental Churches, and not from their claim to have precedence over the species of monk which was protected by Frenchmen. At length he addressed the two Ambassadors; he solemnly expressed his hope that they would come to an adjustment. His words brought calm. In obedience, as it were, to the order of Nature, the lesser minds gave way to the greater, and the contention between the Churches for the shrines of Palestine was closed. The manner in which the Sultan should guarantee this apportionment of the shrines was still left open, but in all

He settles it.

other respects the question of the Holy Places was settled.*

Terms on which it was settled.

According to the terms of the arrangement thus effected, the key of the Church of Bethlehem and the silver star placed in the Grotto of the Nativity were to remain where they were, but were to confer no new right on the Latins; and the doorkeeper of the Church was to be a Greek priest as before, but was to have no right to obstruct other nations in their right to enter the building. The question of precedence at the Tomb of the Blessed Virgin was ingeniously eluded by the device before spoken of; for the priority given to the Greeks was treated as though it resulted from a convenient arrangement of hours rather than from any intent to grant precedence; and it was accordingly arranged that the Greeks should worship in the Church every morning immediately after sunrise, and then the Armenians, and then the Latins, each nation having an hour and a half for the purpose. Perhaps it was in order to hinder the outgoing worshippers from coming into conflict with those who were about to begin their devotions that the gentle Armenians were thus interposed between the two angry Churches. The gardens of the Convent of Bethlehem were to remain, as before, under the joint care of the Greeks and Latins. With regard to the Cupola of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, it was arranged that it should be repaired

* April 22, 1853. "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 157.

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by the Sultan in such a way as not to alter its form; and if, in the course of the building, any deviation from this engagement should appear to be threatened, the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem was to be authorised to remonstrate, with a view to guard against innovation. The buildings overlooking the terraces of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were to have their windows walled up, but were not to be demolished, and therefore no effect could be given to the Russian plan of setting apart a neutral ground to be kept free from the dominion of both the contending Churches. All these arrangements were to be embodied in firmans addressed by the Sultan to the Turkish authorities at Jerusalem.*

Thus, after having tasked the patience of European diplomacy for a period of nearly three years, the business of apportioning the holy shrines of Palestine between the Churches of the East and of the West was brought at last to a close. The question was perhaps growing ripe for settlement when Lord Stratford reached Constantinople, but whether it was so or not, he closed it in seventeen days. For the part which he had taken in helping to achieve this result he received the thanks of the Turkish Government and of the Russian and the French Ambassadors. The Divan might well be grateful to him, and he deserved, too, the thanks of his French colleague; for, having more insight into the new policy

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 248.

of the French Government than M. de la Cour, he was able to place him in the path which turned out to be the right one. But when Lord Stratford received the thanks of Prince Mentschikoff, he felt perhaps that the gravity which had served him well in these transactions was a gift which was still of some use.

CHAPTER XI.

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WHILST the question of the Holy Places was approaching the solution which was attained on the 22d of April, Prince Mentschikoff went on with his demand for the protectorate of the Greek Church in Turkey; but the character of his mission was fitfully changed from time to time by the tenor of his instructions from home. On the 12th of April, the peaceful views which had prevailed at St Petersburg some weeks before were still governing the Russian Embassy at Constantinople; and Lord Stratford was able to report that the altered tone and demeanour of Prince Mentschikoff corresponded with the conciliatory assurances which Count Nesselrode had been giving in the previous month to Sir Hamilton Seymour. But on the following day all was changed. Fresh despatches came in from St Petersburg. They breathed anger and violent impatience, and of this anger and of this impatience the causes were visible. It was the measure adopted in Paris, several weeks before, which had rekindled the dying embers of the quarrel at St Petersburg, and the torch was now brought to Constantinople. It has been seen that, without reason, and without communication with the

Peaceful aspect of the negotiation.

Angry despatches from St Petersburg.

English Ministers* (though it professed to be acting in unison with them), the French Government had ordered the Toulon fleet to approach the scene of controversy by advancing to Salamis; and it was whilst the indignation roused by this movement was still fresh in the mind of the Emperor Nicholas that the despatches had been framed. Moreover, at the time of sending off the despatches, the Czar knew that by the day they reached the shores of the Bosphorus, the man of whom he never could think with temper or calmness would already be at Constantinople, and he of course understood that, in the way of diplomatic strife, his Lord High Admiral the Serene Prince Governor of Finland was unfit for an encounter with Lord Stratford. He seems, therefore, to have determined to extricate his Ambassador from the unequal conflict by putting an end to what there was of a diplomatic character in the mission, and urging him into a course of sheer violence, which would supersede the finer labours of negotiation.

Cause of the change.

From the change which the despatches wrought in Prince Mentschikoff's course of action, from the steps which he afterwards took, and from the known bent and temper of the Czar's mind, it may be inferred that the instructions now received by the Russian Ambassador were somewhat to this effect:—"The "French fleet has been ordered to Salamis. The "Emperor is justly indignant. You must bring your

Inferred tenor of the fresh despatches.

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 98.

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"mission to a close forthwith. Be peremptory both "with the French and the Turks. If the French "Ambassador is obstinate enough upon the question "of the Holy Places to give you a tenable ground "on which you can stand out, then hasten at once "to a rupture upon that business without further "discussion about our ulterior demands. But if the "French Ambassador throws no sufficing difficulties "in the way of the settlement of the question of the "Holy Places, then press your demand for the pro- "tectorate of the Greek Church. Press it peremp- "torily. In carrying out these instructions, you have "full discretion so far as concerns all forms and "details, but in regard to time the Emperor grants "you no latitude. You must force your mission to "a close. By the time you receive this despatch "Stratford Canning will be at Constantinople. He "has ever thwarted His Majesty the Emperor. The "inscrutable will of Providence has bestowed upon "him great gifts of mind, which he has used for no "other purpose than to baffle and humiliate the Em- "peror, and keep down the Orthodox Church. In "negotiation, or in contest for influence over the "Turks, he would overcome you and crush you, but "his instructions do not authorise him to be more "than a mere peaceful negotiator. You, on the con- "trary, are supported by force. He can only per- "suade; you can threaten. Strike terror. Make the "Divan feel the weight of our preparations in Bess- "arabia and at Sebastopol. Dannenburg's horsemen

"are close upon the Pruth. When the Emperor re-
"members the position of the 4th and the 5th corps
"d'armée, and the forwardness of his naval prepara-
"tions, he conceives he has a right to expect that
"you should instantly be able to take the ascendant
"over a man who, with all his hellish ability, is
"after all nothing more than the representative of a
"country absorbed in the pursuit of gain. The Em-
"peror cannot and will not endure that his Repre-
"sentative, supported by the forces of the Empire,
"should remain secondary to the English Ambassador.
"Again the Emperor commands me to say you must
"strike terror. Use a fierce insulting tone. If the
"Turks remain calm, it will be because Stratford
"Canning supports them. Therefore demand private
"audiences of the Sultan, and press upon his fears.
"If your last demands, whatever they may be, are
"rejected, quit Coustantinople immediately with your
"whole suite, and carry away with you the whole
"staff of our Legation."

Mentschikoff's demand for a protectorate of the Greek Church in Turkey.

On the day after receiving his despatches Prince Mentschikoff had a long interview with Rifaat Pasha, and strove to wrench from him the assent of the Turkish Government to the terms already submitted to the Porte as the project for a secret treaty. And although it happened that in the course of the negotiations on this subject Russia submitted to accept many changes in the form or the wording of the engagement which she required, it may be said with accuracy that, from the first to the last, she always

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required the Porte to give her an instrument which should have the force of a treaty engagement, and confer upon her the right to insist that the Greek Church and Clergy in Turkey should continue in the enjoyment of all their existing privileges. It was clear, therefore, that if the Sultan should be induced to set his seal to any instrument of this kind, he would be chargeable with a breach of treaty engagements whenever a Greek bishop could satisfy a Russian Emperor that there was some privilege formerly enjoyed by him or his Church which had been varied or withdrawn. It was plain that for the Sultan to yield thus much would be to make the Czar a partaker of his sovereignty. This seemed clear to men of all nations, except the Russians themselves; but especially it seemed clear to those who happened to know something of the structure of the Ottoman Empire. The indolence or the wise instinct of the Mussulman rulers had given to the Christian "nations" living within the Sultan's dominions many of the blessings which we cherish under the name of "self-government;" and since the Greek Christians had exercised these privileges by deputing their bishops and their priests to administer the authority conceded to the "nation," it followed that the spiritual dominion of the priesthood had become blended with a great share of temporal power. So many of the duties of prefects, of magistrates, of assessors, of collectors, and of police were discharged by bishops, priests, and deacons, that a protec-

Effect which would be produced by conceding it.

torate of these ecclesiastics might be so used by a powerful foreign Prince, as to carry with it a virtual sovereignty over ten or fourteen millions of laymen.

The negotiations which followed the demand.

All this had been seen by Lord Stratford and by the Turkish Ministers; and when Prince Mentschikoff pressed the treaty upon Rifaat Pasha he was startled, as it would seem, by the calmness and the full knowledge which he encountered. "The treaty," said Rifaat Pasha, "would be giving to Russia an exclusive pro-"tectorate over the whole Greek population, their "clergy, and their Churches."*

The Prince, it would seem, now began to know that he had to do with the English Ambassador, for he made the alteration before adverted to in the draft of his treaty, and on the 20th of April read it in its amended shape to Lord Stratford, and assured him that it was only an explanatory guarantee of existing treaties, giving to the co-religionists of Russia what Austria already possessed with regard to hers. Lord Stratford on that day had approached to within forty-eight hours of the settlement of the question of the Holy Places, which he deemed it so vital to achieve; and it may be easily imagined that, in the remarks which he might make upon hearing the draft read, he would abstain with great care from irritating discussion, and would not utter a word more than was necessary for the purpose of fairly indicating that his postponement of discussion on the

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 153.

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subject of the ulterior demands was not to be mistaken for acquiescence; but all that for that purpose was needed he fairly said, for he observed to Prince Mentschikoff "that the Sultan's promise to protect "his Christian subjects in the free exercise of their "religion differed extremely from a right conferred "on any foreign Power to enforce that protection, and "also that the same degree of interference might be "dangerous to the Porte, when exercised by so power-"ful an empire as Russia on behalf of ten millions "of Greeks, and innocent in the case of Austria, "whose influence derivable from religious sympathy "was confined to a small number of Catholics, in-"cluding her own subjects."* These remarks were surely not ambiguous; but it seems probable that Prince Mentschikoff, misled by his previous impression as to what Lord Stratford really objected to, may have imagined that the proposed convention in its altered form would not be violently disapproved by the English Ambassador. At all events, he seems to have instructed his Government to that effect.

On the 19th of April the Russian Ambassador addressed his remonstrances and his demands to the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs in the form of a diplomatic Note. In the first sentence of this singular document Prince Mentschikoff tells the Minister for Foreign Affairs that he must have "seen the "duplicity of his predecessor." In the next he tells

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 156.

him he must be "convinced of the extent to which "the respect due to the Emperor had been disre- "garded, and how great was his magnanimity in "offering to the Porte the means of escaping from "the embarrassments occasioned to it by the bad "faith of its Ministers;" and then, after more objurgation in the same strain, and after dealing in a peremptory way with the question of the Holy Places, the Note goes on to declare that "in consequence of "the hostile tendencies manifested for some years "past in whatever related to Russia, she required in "behalf of the religious communities of the Orthodox "Church an explanatory and positive act of guarantee." Then the Note requested that the Ottoman Cabinet would "be pleased in its wisdom to weigh the serious "nature of the offence which it had committed, and "compare it with the moderation of the demands "made for reparation and guarantee, which a consider- "ation of legitimate defence might have put forward "at greater length and in more peremptory terms." Finally the Note stated that "the reply of the Minister "for Foreign Affairs would indicate to the Ambassador "the ulterior duties which he would have to discharge;" and intimated that those duties would be "consistent "with the dignity of the Government which he "represented, and of the religion professed by his "Sovereign."*

It might have been politic for Prince Mentschikoff

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 158.

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to send such a Note as this in the midst of the panic which followed his landing in the early days of March, but it was vain to send it now. The Turks had returned to their old allegiance. They could take their rest, for they knew that Lord Stratford watched. Him they feared, him they trusted, him they obeyed. It was in vain now that the Prince sought to crush the will of the Sultan and of his Ministers. Whether he threatened, or whether he tried to cajole; whether he sent his dragoman with angry messages to the Porte, or whether he went thither in person; whether he urged the members of the Government in private interviews, or whether he obtained audience of the Sultan, he always encountered the same firmness, the same courteous deference, and, above all, that same terrible moderation which, day by day and hour by hour, was putting him more and more in the wrong. The voice which spoke to him might be the voice of the Grand Vizier, or the voice of the Reis Effendi, or the voice of the Sultan himself; but the mind which he was really encountering was always the mind of one man.

Far from quailing under the threatening tone of the Note, the Turkish Government now determined to enter into no convention with Russia, and to reject Prince Mentschikoff's proposals respecting the protection of the Greek Church in Turkey. The Grand Vizier and the Reis Effendi calmly consulted Lord Stratford as to the manner in which they should give effect to the decision of the Cabinet, and Lord

Stratford, now placed at ease by the settlement of the question of the Holy Places, contentedly prepared to encounter the next expected moves of Prince Mentschikoff.* CHAP. XI.

Rage of the Czar on finding himself encountered by Lord Stratford.

In strife for ascendancy like that which was now going on between the Czar and Lord Stratford, the pain of undergoing defeat is of such a kind that the pangs of the sufferer accumulate; and far from being assuaged by time, they are every day less easy to bear than they were the day before. By the pomp and the declared significance of Prince Mentschikoff's mission, the Emperor Nicholas had drawn upon himself the eyes of Europe, and the presence of the religious ingredient had brought him under the gaze of many millions of his own subjects who were not commonly observers of the business of the State. And he who, in transactions thus watched by men, was preparing for him cruel discomfiture — he who kept him on the rack, and regulated his torments with cold unrelenting precision — was the old familiar enemy whom he had once refused to receive as the English Ambassador at St Petersburg. People who knew the springs of action in the Russian capital used to say at that time that the whole "Eastern Question," as it was called, lay enclosed in one name — lay enclosed in the name of Lord Stratford. They acknowledged that the Emperor Nicholas could

* 24th April. Ibid. p. 160. The settlement of the question of the Holy Places was on the 22d.

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not bear the stress of our Ambassador's authority with the Porte.

And, in truth, the Czar's power of endurance was drawing to a close. He wavered and wavered again and again. He was versed in business of state, and it would seem that when his mind was turned to things temporal he truly meant to be politic and just. But in his more religious moments he was furious. Even for Nicholas the Czar it was all but impossible to endure the Ambassador's political ascendancy; but the bare thought of Lord Stratford's protecting Christianity in Turkey was more than could be borne by Nicholas the Pontiff. Men not jesting approached him with stories that the Ambassador had determined to bring over the Sultan to the Church of England. His brain was not strong enough to be safe against rumours like that. He almost came to feel that the Englishman, who seemed to be endued with strange powers of compulsion always used for the support of Moslem dominion and for curbing the orthodox Russo-Greek Church, was a being in his nature Satanic, and that resistance to him was as much a duty (and was a duty as thickly beset with practical difficulties) as resistance to the great enemy of mankind. Maddened at last by this singular kind of torment, the Czar broke loose from the restraints of policy, and was even so void of counsel that, having determined to do violence to the Sultan, he did not take the common care of giving to his action any semblance of consistency with public law.

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The despatches framed under the orders of a monarch in this condition of mind reached Prince Mentschikoff in the beginning of May. Breathing fresh anger and enjoining haste, they fiercely drove him on. They urged him to an almost instantaneous rupture, without giving him a standing-ground for his quarrel. Yet at this time the condition of things was of such a kind that a good cause, nay even a specious grievance, would have helped Prince Mentschikoff better than the advance of the 4th and 5th corps, or the patrolling of Dannenburg's cavalry.

Its effect upon the negotiation.

In truth, what now befell the Russian Ambassador was this: — He found himself placed under the compulsion of violent instructions at a time when all ground for just resentment was wanting. He could obey his orders, and force on a rupture; but he could no longer do this upon grounds which Europe would regard as having a semblance of fairness. When he had despatched his Note of the 19th of April, the question of the Holy Places was still unsettled, and he was then able to blend that grievance with other matters, and make it serve as a basis for his ulterior demands; but now that that question was disposed of his standing-ground failed him, for he alleged against the Sultan no infraction of a treaty, and the only grievance of which he had had to complain had been redressed on the 22d of April; and yet, passing straight from this smooth condition of things, he had to call upon the Sultan to sign a treaty

Mentschikoff's difficulty.

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which he disapproved, and to make his refusal to do so a ground for the immediate rupture of diplomatic relations.

He is baffled by Lord Stratford.

The natural hope of a diplomatist placed in a stress of this sort would have lain in the chance that the Government upon which he was pressing might be guilty of some imprudence, and it may be inferred that the Note of the 19th had been framed with a view of provoking the Turkish Ministers into a burst of anger. But every hope of this kind had been baffled. Turks were fanatical, Turks were fierce, Turks were quick to avenge, and, above all, Turks were liable to panic; but some spell had come upon the race. The spell had come upon the Sultan, it had come upon the Turkish Ministers, it had come upon the Great Council, it had come even upon the larger mass of the warlike people who bring their feelings to bear upon the policy of their Sultan. At every step of his negotiation Prince Mentschikoff encountered an adversary always courteous, always moderate, but cold, steadfast, wary, and seeming as though he looked to the day when perhaps he might wreak cruel vengeance. Who this was the Prince now knew; and he perhaps began to understand the nature of the torment inflicted upon his imperial Master by the bare utterance of the one hated name. Prince Mentschikoff found himself powerless as a negotiator, and it was clear that, unless he could descend to the rude expedient of an ultimatum or a threat, he was a man annulled. Indeed, without

some act of violence he could hardly deliver himself from ridicule.

He presses his demand in a new form.

Therefore, on the 5th of May, Prince Mentschikoff forwarded to the Minister for Foreign Affairs the draft of a Sened or Convention, purporting to be made between the Sultan and the Emperor of Russia. This proposed Sened confirmed, with the force of a treaty engagement, the arrangements respecting the Holy Places which had been made in favour of the Greek Church, and it also introduced and applied to the rival Churches a provision similar in its wording to that which often appears in commercial treaties, and goes by the name of "the "most favoured nation clause." But the noxious feature of the Convention was detected in the Article which purported to secure for ever to the Orthodox Church and its Clergy all the rights and immunities which they had already enjoyed, and those of which they were possessed from ancient times.* Here, under a new form, was the old endeavour to obtain for Russia a protectorate of the Greek Church in Turkey.

This draft of a Convention was annexed to a Note, in which Prince Mentschikoff pressed its immediate adoption, and urged the Sublime Porte, "laying "aside all hesitation and all mistrust, by which," he declared, "the dignity and the generous sentiments "of his august Master would be aggrieved,"** to de-

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 167.

** "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 165.

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lay its decision no longer. In conclusion, Prince Mentschikoff suffered himself to request that the Minister for Foreign Affairs would be good enough to let him have his answer by the following Tuesday, and to add that he could not "consider any longer "delay in any other light than as a want of respect "towards his Government, which would impose upon "him the most painful duty."*

Counsels of Lord Stratford.

Upon receiving this hostile communication, the Minister for Foreign Affairs appealed to Lord Stratford for counsel. He advised the Turkish Government to be still deferential, still courteous, still willing to go to the very edge of what might be safely conceded, but to stand firm.

His communications with Prince Mentschikoff.

At this time Lord Stratford received a visit from Prince Mentschikoff, and ascertained from him that he did not mean to recede from his demands. The Prince declared that he had run out the whole line of his moderation, and could go no further, and that his Government would no longer submit to the state of inferiority in which he said Russia was held with reference to the co-religionists of the Emperor Nicholas.

A few days later Lord Stratford addressed a letter to Prince Mentschikoff, in which, with all the diplomatic courtesy of which he was master, he strove to convey to the Prince some idea of the way in which he was derogating from that justice and moderation

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 165.

towards foreign sovereigns which had hitherto marked the reign of the Emperor Nicholas. The answer of Prince Mentschikoff announced that it was impossible for him to agree in the views pressed upon him by Lord Stratford, and (after a little more of the wasteful verbiage in which Russia used to assert that her exaction was good and wholesome for Turkey) the Prince claimed a right to freedom of action. He said that he was not conscious of having failed in the loyal assurances given by his Government to the Cabinet of the Queen, declared that he had been perfectly sincere in his communications with Lord Stratford, and owned that he had expected a frank co-operation on his part. But when he had written these common things the truth broke out. "The "Emperor's legation," said he, "cannot stay at Con- "stantinople, under the circumstances in which it has "been placed. It cannot submit to the secondary "position to which it might be wished to reduce it."*

Lord Stratford, it would seem, had now little hope of being able to bring about an accommodation, and henceforth his great object was to take care that the Porte should stand firm, but should so act that, in the opinion of England and of Europe, the Sultan should seem justified in exposing himself to the hazard of a rupture with Russia.

His advice to the Turkish Ministers.

Late at night Lord Stratford saw the Grand Vizier at his country-house, and the Minister for

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 217.

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Foreign Affairs and the Seraskier were present. During the day there had been a little failing of heart, and when the Turkish Ministers were in the presence of M. de la Cour, they had seemed "disposed to shrink from encountering the consequences "of Prince Mentschikoff's retiring in displeasure;"* but either they had dissembled their fears in the presence of the English Ambassador, or else, whilst Lord Stratford was in the same room with them, their fear of other Powers was suspended. They were unanimous in regarding the Convention as inadmissible. Lord Stratford's determination was that the demand of Prince Mentschikoff should be resisted; but that at the same time there should be shown so much of courtesy and of forbearance, and so great a willingness to go to the utmost limit of safe concession, and to improve the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte, that the Turks should appear before Europe in a character almost angelic. "I advised them," said he, "to open a door for "negotiation in the Note to be prepared, and to "withhold no concession compatible with the real "welfare and independence of the Empire. I could "not in conscience urge them to accept the Russian "demands as now presented to them, but I reminded "them of the guarantee required by Prince Mentschi-"koff, and strongly recommended that, if the guaran-"tee he required was inadmissible, a substitute for it

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 177.

"should be found in a frank and comprehensive exer- "cise of the Sultan's authority in the promulgation "of a firman, securing both the spiritual and tem- "poral privileges of all the Porte's tributary subjects, "and, by way of further security, communicated of- "ficially to the five great Powers of Christendom."* To all these counsels the Turkish Ministers listened with assenting mind.

But it was now late in the night, and the Ambassador rose. Perhaps the hour and the Ambassador's movement to depart cast a shadow of anxiety upon the minds of the Turkish Ministers. Perhaps the ripple of the waters (for the conference was in a house on the edge of the Bosphorus) called to mind the thought of the English flag. At all events, the Grand Vizier, in that moment of weakness, suffered himself to cast a thought after the arm of the flesh, and to ask whether the Porte might expect the eventual approach of the English squadron in the Mediterranean. Lord Stratford rebuked him. "I "replied," said he, "that I considered the position in "its present stage to be one of a moral character, "and consequently that its difficulties or hazards, "whatever they might be, should be rather met by "acts of a similar description than by demonstrations "calculated to increase alarm and provoke resent- "ment." It was a new and a strange task for this Grand Vizier of a warlike Tartar nation to be called upon

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 177.

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to defend a threatened empire by "acts of a moral "character;" but after all his reliance was upon the man. It might be hard for him to understand how the mere advantage of being in the right could be used against the Sebastopol fleet, or the army that was hovering upon the Pruth; but if he looked upon the close, angry, resolute lips of the Ambassador, and the grand overhanging of his brow, he saw that which more than all else in the world takes hold of the Oriental mind, for he saw strength held in reserve. And this faith was of such a kind that, far from being weakened, it would gather new force from Lord Stratford's refusal to speak of material help. The Turkish Ministry determined to reject Prince Mentschikoff's proposals, and to do this in the way advised by the English Ambassador. All this while Lord Stratford was unconscious of exercising any ascendancy over his fellow-creatures, and it seemed to him that the Turks were determining this momentous question by means of their unbiassed judgments.*

Prince Mentschikoff was soon made aware of the refusal with which his demand was to be met, and, finding that all his communications with the Turkish Ministers gave him nothing but the faithful echo of the counsels addressed to them by Lord Stratford, he seems to have imagined the plan of overstepping the Turkish Ministers, and endeavouring to wring an assent to his demands from the Sultan himself. It

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 213.

seems probable that Lord Stratford had been apprised of this intention, and was willing to defeat it, for on the 9th he sought a private audience of the Sultan: he sought it, of course, through the legitimate channel. The Minister for Foreign Affairs went with Lord Stratford to the Sultan's apartment, and then withdrew. The Ambassador spoke gravely to the Sultan of the danger with which his Empire was threatened, and then of the grounds for confidence. He was happy, he said, to find that His Majesty's servants, both Ministers and Council, were not less inclined to gratify the Russian Ambassador with all that could be safely conceded to him, than determined to withhold their consent from every requisition calculated to inflict a serious injury on the independence and dignity of their Sovereign. "I had "waited," said Lord Stratford, "to know their own "unbiassed impressions respecting the kind of gua- "rantee demanded by Prince Mentschikoff, and I "could not do otherwise than approve the decision "which they appeared to have adopted with unanimity. "My own impression is, that if your Majesty should "sanction that decision, the Ambassador will probably "break off his relations with the Porte and go away, "together perhaps with his whole embassy: nor is it "quite impossible even that a temporary occupation, "however unjust, of the Danubian Principalities by "Russia may take place; but I feel certain that neither "a declaration of war, nor any other act of open hos- "tility, is to be apprehended for the present, as the

His audience of the Sultan.

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"Emperor Nicholas cannot resort to such extremities "on account of the pending differences without con- "tradicting his most solemn assurances, and exposing "himself to the indignant censure of all Europe. I "conceive that, under such circumstances, the true po- "sition to be maintained by the Porte is one of moral "resistance to such demands as are really inadmis- "sible on just and essential grounds, and that the "principle should even be applied under protest to "the occupation of the Principalities, not in weakness "or despair, but in reliance on a good cause, and on "the sympathy of friendly and independent Govern- "ments. A firm adherence to this line of conduct as "long as it is possible to maintain it with honour "will, in my judgment, offer the best chance of ulti- "mate success with the least practicable degree of "provocation, and prevent disturbance of commercial "interests. This language," writes Lord Stratford, "appeared to interest the Sultan deeply, and also "to coincide with His Majesty's existing opinions. "He said that he was well aware of the dangers to "which I had alluded; that he was perfectly pre- "pared, in the exercise of his own free will, to con- "firm and to render effective the protection pro- "mised to all classes of his tributary subjects in "matters of religious worship, including the immu- "nities and privileges granted to their respective "clergy. He showed me the last communications in "writing which had passed between his Ministers and "the Russian Embassy; he thanked me for having

"helped to bring the question of the Holy Places to "an arrangement; he professed his reliance on the "friendly support of Great Britain." CHAP. XI.

But now Lord Stratford apprised the Sultan that he had a communication to make to him which he had hitherto withheld from his Ministers, reserving it for the private ear of his Majesty. The pale Sultan listened. The disclosure which he had reserved for the Sultan's ear.

Then the Ambassador announced that, in the event of imminent danger, he was instructed to request the Commander of Her Majesty's forces in the Mediterranean to hold his squadron in readiness.*

This order was of itself a slight thing, and it conferred but a narrow and stinted authority; but, imparted to the Sultan in private audience by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, it came with more weight than the promise of armed support from the lips of a common Statesman. Long withheld from the Turkish Ministers, and now disclosed to them through their Sovereign, it confirmed them in the faith that whatever a man might know of the great Eltchi's power, there was always more to be known. And when a man once comes to be thus thought of by Orientals, he is more their master than one who seeks to overpower their minds by making coarse pretences of strength.

On the 10th the Secretary for Foreign Affairs sent his answer to Prince Mentschikoff's demand. Turkish answer to Mentschikoff's demand.

* "Eastern Papers," part. i. p. 213.

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The letter was full of courtesy and deference towards Russia: it declared it to be the firm intention of the Porte to maintain unimpaired the rights of all the tributary subjects of the Empire, and it expressed a willingness to negotiate with Russia concerning a church and an hospital at Jerusalem, and also as to the privileges which should be conceded to Russian subjects, monks and pilgrims; but the Note objected to entertain that portion of the Russian demands which went to give Russia a protectorate of the Greek Church in Turkey.*

Mentschikoff's angry reply.

On the following day Prince Mentschikoff sent an angry reply to this Note, declining to accept it as an answer to his demand. He stated that he was instructed to negotiate for an engagement guaranteeing the privileges of the Greek Church as a mark of respect to the religious convictions of the Emperor: and if the principles which formed the basis of this proposed mark of respect were to be rejected, and if the Porte, by a systematic opposition, was to persist in closing the very approaches to an intimate and direct understanding, then the Prince declared with pain that he must consider his mission at an end, must break off relations with the Cabinet of the Sultan, and throw upon the responsibility of his Ministers all the consequences which might ensue. The Prince ended his Note by requiring that it should be answered within three days.**

* May 10. "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 196.

** May 11. Ibid. p. 197.

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His private audience of the Sultan.

On the second day after sending this Note, Prince Mentschikoff was to have an interview with the Grand Vizier at half-past one o'clock; but before that hour came the Prince took a step which had the effect of breaking up the Ministry. Without the concurrence, and apparently without the previous knowledge, of the Ministers, he found means to obtain a private audience of the Sultan at ten o'clock in the morning. The Sultan did wrongly when he submitted to receive a foreign Ambassador without the advice or knowledge of his Ministers, and the Grand Vizier had the spirit to resent the course thus taken by his Sovereign; for upon being sent for by the Sultan immediately after the audience, he requested permission to stay at home, and at the same time gave up his seals of office. The new Ministry, however, was formed of men who, as members of the Great Council, had declared opinions adverse to the extreme demands of Russia.* Reshid Pasha became the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; and this was not an appointment which disclosed any intention on the part of the Sultan to disengage him from the counsels of the English Ambassador.

This causes a change of Ministry at Constantinople;

If the Sultan had erred in granting an audience without the assent of his Ministers, he had carried his weakness no further. It soon transpired that Prince Mentschikoff had failed to wring from the Sultan any dangerous words. It seems that when the Prince

but fails to shake the Sultan.

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 194.

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came to press his demands upon the imperial ear, he found the monarch reposing in the calmness of mind which had been given him by the English Ambassador five days before, and in a few moments he had the mortification of hearing that for all answer to his demands he was referred to the Ministers of State.* In the judgment of Prince Mentschikoff, to be thus answered was to be remitted back to Lord Stratford. It was hard to bear.

Mentschikoff violently presses his demands.

Prince Mentschikoff began his intercourse with the new Foreign Secretary by insisting upon an immediate reply to his Note of the 11th of May. Reshid Pasha asked for the delay of a few days, on the ground of the change of Ministry. This reasonable demand was met at first by a refusal, but afterwards by a Note which seems to have been rendered incoherent by the difficulty in which Prince Mentschikoff was placed; for, on the one hand, a request for a delay of a few days, founded upon a change of Ministry, was a request too fair to be refused with decency; and, on the other hand, the violent orders which had just come in from St Petersburg enjoined the Prince to close the unequal strife with Lord Stratford, and to enforce instant compliance, or at once break off and depart. The Note began by announcing that Reshid Pasha's communication imposed upon the Russian Ambassador the duty of breaking off from the then present time his official relations with the

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 195.

Sublime Porte; but it added that the Ambassador would suspend the last demand, which was to determine the attitude which Russia would thenceforth assume towards Turkey. The Note further declared that a continuance of hesitation on the part of the Ottoman Government would be regarded as an indication of reserve and distrust offensive to the Russian Government, and that the departure of the Russian Ambassador, and also of the Imperial Legation, would be the inevitable and immediate consequence.

The Great Council determine to resist.

By the voices of forty-two against three, the Great Council of the Porte determined to adhere to the decision already taken; and on the 18th, Reshid Pasha called upon Prince Mentschikoff, and orally imparted to him the extreme length to which the Turkish Government was willing to go in the way of concession. The honour of the Porte required, he said, that the exclusively spiritual privileges granted under the Sultan's predecessors, and confirmed by His Majesty, should remain in full force; and he declared that the equitable system pursued by the Porte towards its subjects demanded that the Greek Clergy should be on as good a footing as other Christian subjects of the Sultan. He added that a firman was to issue proclaiming this determination on the part of the Sultan. In regard to the shrine at Jerusalem, Reshid Pasha was willing to engage that there should be no change without communicating with the Russian and French Governments.

Offers made by the Porte under the advice of Lord Stratford.

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Reshid Pasha also consented that a church and hospital for the Russians should be built at Jerusalem; and in regard to all these last matters connected with the Holy Land, the Porte, he said, was willing to solemnise its promise by a formal convention. These overtures were made in exact accordance with a Paper of advice which Lord Stratford had placed in the hands of Reshid Pasha five days before.* Virtually Reshid Pasha offered Prince Mentschikoff everything which Russia had demanded, except the protectorate of the Greek Church in Turkey,** — that he refused.

Instantly, and without waiting for the written statement of the proposals orally conveyed to him by Reshid Pasha, Prince Mentschikoff determined to break off the negotiation. On the same day he addressed to the Porte an official Note, which purported to be truly his last. In this he declared that by rejecting with distrust the wishes of the Emperor in favour of the orthodox Greco-Russian religion, the Sublime Porte had failed in what was due to an august and ancient ally. The refusal, he said, was a fresh injury. He declared his mission at an end; and after asserting that the Imperial Court could not, without prejudice to its dignity and without exposing itself to fresh insults, continue to maintain a mission at Constantinople, he announced that he should not only quit Constantinople himself, but

Mentschikoff replies by declaring his mission at an end.

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 196.

** Ibid., p. 205, and see p. 252.

should take with him the whole Staff of the Imperial Legation, except the Director of the Commercial Department. The Prince added, that the refusal of a guarantee for the orthodox Greco-Russian religion obliged the Imperial Government to seek in its own power that security which the Porte declined to give by way of treaty engagement; and he added that any infringement of the existing state of the Eastern Church would be regarded as an act of hostility to Russia.*

The representatives of the four Powers assembled by Lord Stratford.

Prince Mentschikoff's departure did not immediately follow the despatch of this Note, and on the morning of the 19th Lord Stratford took a step of great moment to the tranquillity of Europe, for it laid the seed of a wholesome policy; which, until it was ruined, as will be seen hereafter, by the evil designs of some, and by the weakness of other men, promised fair to enforce justice and to maintain truth without bringing upon the world the calamity of a war. Instead of putting himself in communication with one only of the other great Powers, and so preparing a road to hostilities, the English Ambassador assembled the representatives of Austria, France, and Prussia. It then appeared that there was no essential difference of opinion between the representatives of the four great Powers. None of them questioned the soundness of the Porte's views in resisting the extreme demands of Russia; all acknowledged the

Policy involved in this step.

Unanimity of the four representatives.

* 18th May. Ibid. p. 206.

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spirit of conciliation displayed by the Sultan's Ministers; all were agreed in desiring to prevent the rupture; all desired that the Emperor Nicholas should be enabled to recede without discredit from the wrong path which he had taken, and were willing to cover his retreat by every device which was consistent with the honour and welfare of other States. This union of opinion, followed close by concerted action, was surely a right example of the way in which it was becoming for Europe to regard an approach to injustice by one of the great Powers.

Their measures

It was arranged that the Austrian Envoy should call upon Prince Mentschikoff, should apprise him of the sorrow with which the representatives of the four Powers contemplated the rupture of his relations with the Porte; should express the lively gratification which a friendly solution, if that were still possible, would afford them; and, finally, should ascertain whether the Prince would receive through a private channel the Porte's intended Note, and give it a calm consideration.* This appeal from the representatives of the four great Powers produced no effect on the mind of Prince Mentschikoff,** and Lord Stratford scarcely expected that it would do so; but it commenced, or rather it marked and strengthened, that expression of grave disapproval on the part of the four Powers, which was the true and the safe corrective of an outrage threatened by one.

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 205.

** Ibid. p. 219.

After his official relations with the Porte had come to a close, Prince Mentschikoff received and rejected the Turkish Note,* which embodied the concessions already described to him orally by Reshid Pasha; but on the evening of the 20th of May the Prince determined to make a concession in point of form, and to be content to have the engagement which he was demanding from the Porte in the form of a diplomatic Note, instead of a Treaty or Convention. In furtherance of this view, though his official capacity had ceased, he caused to be delivered to Reshid Pasha the draft of a Note to be given by the Porte. This draft purported to involve the Porte in engagements exactly the same as those which it had refused to contract, and to give to Russia (by means of a Note instead of a Convention) the protectorate of the Greek Church in Turkey.** Reshid Pasha immediately sent the Note to Lord Stratford for communication to the three other representatives of the four Powers, with a request that they would give an opinion as to the most advisable mode of proceeding. Early the next morning, Lord Stratford ascertained that, in the opinion of Reshid Pasha, the altered form of the Russian demands left them as objectionable as ever.*** The Russians imagined that Reshid Pasha

Russia's ultimatum.

* This Note, being the last offer made by the Turkish Government to Prince Mentschikoff, is printed in the Appendix.

** "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 220. As this Draft was Prince Mentschikoff's real ultimatum, it is printed in the Appendix.

*** Ibid. pp. 219, 220.

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was willing to give way to them, and that he even entreated Lord Stratford to let him yield, but that the English Ambassador was inexorable. There was no truth in this notion.* Lord Stratford's counsels had cut so deep into the mind of the Turkish Minister that he was well able to follow them without wanting guidance from hour to hour. The English Ambassador assembled the representatives of the three Powers, and found that they unanimously agreed with him "in adopting an opinion essentially "identical with that of the Turkish Ministers."** They all signed a memorandum declaring that, "upon a question which so closely touched the free- "dom of action and the sovereignty of His Majesty "the Sultan, his Highness Reshid Pasha was the best "judge of the course which it was fitting to take, "and they did not consider themselves authorised to "pronounce an opinion."***

Its rejection.

Prince Mentschikoff had caused it to be understood that this his last demand was only to be accepted by being accepted in full. It was rejected, and on the 21st of May the Prince was preparing to depart, when he heard that the Porte intended to issue and proclaim a guarantee for the exercise of the spiritual rights possessed by the Greek Church in Turkey. It was hard for Russia to endure the resistance which she had encountered, but it was more difficult still to

* It is clearly disproved. "Eastern Papers," part i. pp. 336-3.
** Ibid. p. 220.
*** Ibid. p. 222.

hear, with any semblance of calmness, that the Porte, of its own free will, was doing a main part of that which the Emperor Nicholas had urged it to do. This was not tolerable. To Russian ears the least utterance about "the free will of the Porte" instantly conveyed the idea that all was to be ordered and governed at the will and pleasure of the English Ambassador. The thought that the protectorate of the Greek Church was not only refused to the Czar, but was now passing quietly into the hands of Lord Stratford, was so maddening, that Prince Mentschikoff, forgetting or transcending the fact that he had formally announced the rupture of his relations with the Porte, now suffered himself to address a solemn Note to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in which (basing himself upon a theory that the mention of the spiritual might be deemed to derogate from the temporal rights of the Church) he announced that any act having the effect which this theory attributed to the proposed guarantee, would be regarded as "hostile to Russia and her religion."* Having despatched these last words of threat, he at length went on board and departed. On the same day the arms of Russia were taken down from the palace of the Imperial Embassy.

Final threats of Prince Mentschikoff.

His departure.

Thus ended the ill-omened mission of Prince Mentschikoff. It had lasted eleven weeks. In that compass of time the Emperor Nicholas destroyed the

Effect of the mission upon the credit of Nicholas.

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 253.

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whole repute which he had earned by wielding the power of Russia, for more than a quarter of a century, with justice and moderation towards foreign States.* But, moreover, in these same fatal days the Emperor Nicholas did much to bring his good faith into question. The tenor of his previous life makes it right to insist that any imputation upon his personal honour shall be tested with scrupulous care; but it is hard to escape the conviction that, during several weeks in the spring of the year, he was giving to the English Government a series of assurances which misrepresented the instructions given by him to Prince Mentschikoff during that same period. Thus, almost at the very hour when Count Nesselrode was assuring Sir Hamilton Seymour that "the adjust-"ment of the difficulties respecting the Holy Places "would settle all matters in dispute between Russia "and the Porte,"** Prince Mentschikoff was striving to wring from the Porte a secret treaty, depriving the Sultan of his control over the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and ceding to Russia a virtual protectorate of the Greek Church in Turkey, and was enjoining the Turkish Ministers to keep this negotiation concealed from the "ill-disposed Powers," for so he called England and France;*** and again, in

* Computed from the Peace of Adrianople in 1829. The reign of Nicholas commenced in 1825.

** Ibid. p. 102. The slight qualification with which Count Nesselrode accompanied the assurance, tended to strengthen it by giving it greater precision.

*** "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 108.

the very week in which the Czar was joining with the English Government in a form more than usually solemn in denouncing the practice of "harassing the "Porte by overbearing demands, put forward in a "manner humiliating to its independence and its "dignity,"* he was shaping the angry despatch which caused Prince Mentschikoff to insult the Porte by his peremptory Note of the 5th of May.

But notwithstanding all this variance between what the Czar said and what he did, it must be acknowledged that it would be hard to explain his words and his course of action by imputing to him a vulgar and rational duplicity; for it was plain that the secrecy at which he aimed would be terminated by the success of the negotiation; and supposing him to have been in possession of his reason, and to have been acting on grounds temporal, he could not have imagined that, for the sake of extorting a new promise from the Sultan, and giving a little more semblance of legality to pretensions which he already maintained to be valid, it was politic for him to forfeit that reputation for honour, which was a main element of his greatness and his strength. The dreams of territorial aggrandisement which he imparted to Sir Hamilton Seymour in January and February had all dissolved before the middle of March, and it is vain to say that after that time his

* Memorandum by the Emperor Nicholas confidentially delivered to Sir Hamilton Seymour, and dated the 15th April 1853. "Eastern Papers," part v. p. 25.

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actions were governed by any rational plan of conquest. Policy required that for encroachments against Turkey he should choose a time when Europe, engaged in some other strife, might be likely to acquiesce; far from doing this, the Czar chose a time when the four Powers had nothing else to do than to watch and restrain the aggression of Russia. Again, policy required that pressure upon the Sultan of a hostile kind should be justified by narratives of the cruel treatment of the Christians by their Turkish masters; yet if any such causes existed for the anger of Christendom, the Emperor Nicholas never took the pains to make them known to Europe. From first to last his loose charges against the Turks for maltreatment of their Christian subjects were not only left without proof, but were even unsupported by anything like statements of fact.

Still, the Czar was not labouring under any general derangement of mind. The truth seems to be that zeal for his Church had made greater inroads upon his moral and intellectual nature than was commonly known, and that when he was under the stress of religious or rather of ecclesiastical feelings he ceased to be politic, and even perhaps ceased to be honest. It was at such times that there came upon him that tendency to act in a spirit of barbaric cunning which was really inconsistent with the general tenor of his life. But if it happened that whilst his mind was already under one of these spiritual visitations, it was further inflamed by any tidings which roused his

old antagonism to Sir Stratford Canning, then instantly it was wrought into such a state that one must be content to mark its fitful and violent impact upon human affairs without undertaking to deduce the result from any symmetrical scheme of action.

But, whatever the cause, the fall was great. The polity of the Russian State was of such a kind that, when the character of its monarch stood high he exalted the empire, and when he descended he drew the empire along with him. In the beginning of March the Emperor Nicholas almost oppressed the continent of Europe with the weight of his vast power, conjoined with moderation and a spirit of austere justice towards foreign States. Before the end of May he stood before the world shorn bare of all this moral strength, and having nothing left to him except what might be reckoned and set down upon paper by an inspector of troops or a surveyor of ships. In less than three months the station of Russia amongst the Powers of Europe underwent a great change.

Position in which Lord Stratford's skill had placed the Porte.

The English Ambassador remained upon the field of the conflict. Between the time of his return to Constantinople and the departure of Prince Mentschikoff there had passed forty-five days. In this period Lord Stratford had brought to a settlement the question of the Holy Places, had baffled all the efforts of the Emperor Nicholas to work an inroad upon the sovereign rights of the Sultan, and had enforced upon the Turks a firmness so indomitable, and a moderation so unwearied, that from the hour of his arrival

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at Constantinople they resisted every claim which was fraught with real danger — but always resisted with courtesy — and yielded to every demand, however unjust in principle, if it seemed that they could yield with honour and with safety. Knowing that, if he left room for doubt whether Russia or the Porte were in the right, the controversy would run a danger of being decided in favour of the stronger, he provided, with a keen foresight, and at the cost of having to put a hard restraint upon his anger, and even upon his sense of justice, that the concessions offered by the Turks should reach beyond their just liability; nay, should reach so far beyond it as to leave a broad margin between, and make it difficult even for any one who inclined towards the strong to deny that Russia was committing an outrage upon a weaker State, and was therefore offending against Europe. In truth, he placed the Moslem before the world in an attitude of Christian forbearance sustained by unfailing courage; and in proportion as men loved justice and were led by the gentle precepts of the Gospel, they inclined to the Mahometan Prince, who seemed to represent their principles, and began to think how best they could help him to make a stand against the ferocious Christianity of the Czar. In England especially this sentiment was kindled, and already it was beginning to gain a hold over the policy of the State. Less than three months before, the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire had been thought a fair subject to bring into question, and

now the firmness and the strange moderation with which the Turks stood resisting the demands of their oppressor, was drawing the English people, day by day, into a steadfast alliance with the Sultan.

But if Lord Stratford had succeeded in gaining over to his cause the general opinion of Europe, or rather in adapting the policy of the Divan to what he knew would be approved by the people of the West, he did not neglect to use such means as he had for moving the Governments of the four Powers; and the concerted action to which he had succeeded in bringing them on the 21st of May was a beginning of the peaceful coercion with which it was fitting that Europe should withstand the encroachments of a wrong-doer. But this was not all that was effected by the diplomatic transactions of the spring. It cannot be concealed that, without the solemnity of a treaty — nay, without the knowledge of Parliament, and perhaps without the knowledge of her Prime Minister — England, in the course of a few weeks, had slided into all the responsibility of a defensive alliance with the Sultan against the Emperor of Russia. It may seem strange that this could be; but the truth is, that the general scope of a lengthened official correspondence is not to be gathered by merely learning at intervals the import of each despatch. Taken singly, almost every despatch composed by a skilled diplomatist will be likely to seem wise and moderate, and deserving of a complete approval; but if a Statesman goes on approving and approving one by one a

Engagements contracted by England.

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long series of papers of this sort without rousing himself to the effort of taking a broader view of the transactions which he has separately examined, he may find himself entangled in a course of action which he never intended to adopt. Perhaps this view tends to explain the reasons which caused a Minister whose love of peace was passionate and almost fanatical to become gradually and imperceptibly responsible for a policy leading towards war. Lord Aberdeen did not formally renounce his neutral policy of 1828, and he did not at this time advise the Queen to conclude any treaty for the defence of Turkey, nor ask the judgment of Parliament upon the expediency of taking such a course; but day after day, and week after week, the cabinet-boxes came and went, and came and went again, and every day he passed his anxious and inevitable hour and a half at the Foreign Office; and at length it became apparent that the Government of which he was the chief had so acted that it could not with honour* recede from the duty of defending the home provinces of the Sultan against an unprovoked attack by Russia.

Obligations contracted by the act of giving advice.

The advice of a strong Power is highly valued, but it is valued for reasons which should make men chary of giving it. It is not commonly valued for the sake of its mere wisdom, but partly because it is more or less a disclosure of policy, and still more because it tends to draw the advising State into a line of action

* So said by Lord Clarendon. "Eastern Papers," part i.

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corresponding with its counsels. England, by the voice of her Ambassador (approved from time to time by the Home Government*), had been advising a weak Power to resist a strong one. Counsels of such a kind could not but have a grave import.

The French Emperor had been more careful to keep himself free from engagements with the Porte; but he had long ago resolved to seize the coming occasion of acting in concert with England. And England now became bound. Within three days from Prince Mentschikoff's departure, France and England were beginning to concert resistance to Russia;** on the 26th of May the Sultan's refusal of the Russian ultimatum was warmly applauded by the English Government, and before the end of the month the Foreign Secretary instructed the English Ambassador that it was "indispensable to "take measures for the protection of the Sultan, "and to aid His Highness in repelling any attack "that might be made upon his territory," and that "the use of force was to be resorted to as a last and "unavoidable resource for the protection of Turkey "against an uprovoked attack, and in defence of her "independence, which England," as Lord Clarendon declared, "was bound to maintain."***

England, in concert with France, becomes engaged to defend the Sultan's dominions.

Lord Clarendon at the same time addressed a de-

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 183.

** 24th May. Ibid p. 182.

*** Ibid. p. 197.

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spatch to St Petersburg, setting forth with painful clearness the difference between the words and the acts of the Czar, and indignantly requiring to know what was the object which Russia had "in view, and "in what manner, and to what extent, the dominions "of the Sultan and the tranquillity of Europe were "threatened."*

The process by which England became bound.

It was not by any one decisive act or promise, but by the tenor of expressions scattered through a long series of Despatches, and by words used from time to time in conversations, that England had taken upon herself the burthen of defending the Sultan against the Czar. Parliament was sitting when this momentous engagement was being contracted, and it may be thought that there was room for questioning whether England in concert with France alone, and without first doing her utmost to obtain the concurrence of the other Powers, should good-humouredly take upon herself a duty which was rather European than English, and which tended to involve her in war. There were eloquent members of the Legislature who would have been willing to deprecate such a policy, and to moderate and confine its action; but apparently they did not understand how England was becoming entangled until about nine months afterwards, and, either from want of knowledge or want of promptitude, they lost the occasion for aiding the

Slowness of the English Parliament.

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 200.

Crown with their counsels. Indeed, from first to last, the backwardness of the English Parliament in seizing upon the changeful phases of the diplomatic strife was one of the main causes of the impending evil, and this was only one of the occasions in which it failed in the duty of opportune utterance. When the Despatch of the 31st of May was once on the road to Constantinople, England stood bound, and all that might be afterwards said about it would be criticism rather than counsel.

So ended one phase of the ancient strife between the Emperor Nicholas and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. Prince Mentschikoff, landing at Odessa, hastened to despatch to his master the best account he could give of the causes of his discomfiture, and of the evil skill of that Antichrist, in stately English form, whom Heaven was permitting for a while to triumph over the Czar and his Church.

Powers intrusted to Lord Stratford.

Lord Stratford reaped the fruit of his toil and of the long-endured pain of encountering violence with moderation. All his acts were approved by the Government, and, so far as they were known and understood, by the bulk of his countrymen at home. And now when he paced the shady gardens, where often he had put upon his anger a difficult restraint, he could look with calm joy to the headland where the Straits opened out into the Euxine, for he knew that the Governments of the Western Powers, supporting his every word, and even overstepping his

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more sober policy, were coming forward to stand between Russia and her prey. The fleet at Malta was to be moved when and whither he chose; and, even to the length of war, the Admiral was ordered to obey any requisitions made to him by the Ambassador.* A few days later the Governments of Paris and London, fearing the consequence of delay, ordered the fleets to move up at once to the neighbourhood of the Dardanelles.** The power to choose between peace and war went from out of the Courts of Paris and London and passed to Constantinople. Lord Stratford was worthy of this trust; for being firm, and supplied with full knowledge, and having power by his own mere ascendancy to enforce moderation upon the Turks, and to forbid panic, and even to keep down tumult, he was able to be very chary in the display of force, and to be more frugal than the Government at home in using or engaging the power of the English Queen. He remained on the ground. Still, as before, he kept down the home dangers which threatened the Ottoman State. Still, as before, he obliged the Turks to deserve the goodwill of Europe; but now, besides, with the arm of the flesh, and no longer with the mere fencing of words, he was there to defend their capital from the gathered rage of the Czar. In truth, at this time he bore much of the weight of empire. Intrusted with

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 199.

** Pp. 210, 225.

the chief prerogative of kings, and living all his time at Therapia, close over the gates of the Bosphorus, he seemed to stand guard against the North, and to answer for the safety of his charge.

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Rage of the Czar.

THE mere sensation of being at strife with the English Ambassador at Constantinople, had kindled in the bosom of the Emperor Nicholas a rage so fierce as to drive him beyond the bounds of policy; but when he came to know the details of the struggle, and to see how, at every step, his Ambassador had been encountered — and, finally, when he heard (for that was the maddening thought) that, by counsels always obeyed, Lord Stratford was calmly exercising a protectorate of all the Churches in Turkey, including the very Church of him the Czar, him the Father, him the Pontiff of Eastern Christendom — he was wrought into such a condition of mind that his fury broke away from the restraint of even the very pride which begot it. Pride counselled the calm use of force, an order to the Admiral at Sebastopol, the silent march of battalions. But the Czar had so lost the control of his anger, that everywhere, and to all who would look upon the sight, he showed the wounds inflicted upon him by his hated adversary. "He addressed," said Lord Clarendon, "to "the different Courts of Europe, unmeasured com- "plaints of Lord Stratford. To him, and to him

"alone, he attributed the failure of Prince Mentschi-"koff's mission."* "An incurable mistrust, a vehement "activity," said Count Nesselrode,** "had characterised "the whole of Lord Stratford's conduct during the "latter part of the negotiation."

Even in formal despatches the Czar caused his Minister to speak as though there were absolutely no government at Constantinople except the mere will of Lord Stratford. "The English Ambassador," Count Nesselrode said, "persisted in refusing us any "kind of guarantee;"** and then the Count went on to picture the Turkish Ministers as prostrate before the English Ambassador, and vainly entreating him to let them yield to Russia. "Reshid Pasha," said he, "struck with the dangers which the depar-"ture of our Legation might entail upon the Porte, "earnestly conjured the British Ambassador not to "oppose the acceptance of the Note drawn up by "Prince Mentschikoff; but Lord Redcliffe prevented "its acceptance by declaring that the Note was "equivalent to a treaty, and was inadmissible."** This last story, it has been seen, was the work of mere fiction;*** but in the Czar Nicholas, as well as in Prince Mentschikoff, there were remains of the Oriental nature which made him ready to believe in the boundless power of a mortal, and he seems to have received without question the fables with which

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 268.

** Ibid. p. 243.

*** This is proved very clearly. Ibid. p. 336 *et seq.*

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the Eastern mind was portraying the unbending, implacable Eltchi. It was vain to show a monarch, thus wrought to anger, that the difference between him and the terrible Ambassador lay simply in the fact that the one was in the wrong and the other in the right. The thought of this only made the discomfiture more bitter. In the eyes of the Czar, Lord Stratford's way of keeping himself eternally in the right and eternally moderate was the mere contrivance, the mere inverted Jesuitism, of a man resolved to do good in order that evil might come — resolved to be forbearing and just for the sake of doing a harm to the Church. It was plain that, to assuage the torment which the Czar was enduring, the remedy was action: yet, strange to say, this disturber of Europe, who seemed to pass his life in preparing soldiery, was not at all ready for a war even against the Sultan alone. His preparations had been stopped in the beginning of March, and the movements which his troops had been making in Bessarabia were movements in the nature of threats. He wished to do some signal act of violence without plunging into war.

The Danubian Principalities.

The disposition of the Russian forces on the banks of the Pruth had long been breeding rumours that the Emperor Nicholas meditated an occupation of the Principalities called Wallachia and Moldavia. These provinces formed a part of the Ottoman dominions in Europe; but they were held by the Sultan under arrangements which modified their subjec-

tion to the Porte and gave them the character of tributary States. Each of them was governed by a prince called a Hospodar, who received his investiture at Constantinople; but the Sultan was precluded by treaty from almost all interference with the internal government of the provinces, and was even debarred the right of sending any soldiery into their territories. Russia, on the other hand, had acquired over these provinces a species of protectorate; and, in the event of their being disturbed by internal anarchy, she had power to aid in repressing the disorder by military occupation. This contingency had not occurred in either of the provinces; but the anomalous form of their political existence caused the Emperor Nicholas to imagine that, by occupying them with a military force, and professing to hold them as a pledge, he could find for himself a middle course betwixt peace and war; and the thought was welcome to him, because, being angry and irresolute, he had been painfully driven to and fro, and was glad to compound with his passion.

The Czar's scheme for occupying them.

On the 31st of May Count Nesselrode addressed a letter to Reshid Pasha, urging the Porte to accept without variation the draft of the Note submitted to it by Prince Mentschikoff and announcing that, if the Porte should fail to do this within a period of eight days, the Russian army, after a few weeks, would cross the frontier, in order to obtain "by "force, but without war," that which the Porte should decline to give up of its own accord. It was

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afterwards explained that this plan of resorting to violence without war was to be carried into effect by occupying the Danubian Principalities, and holding them as a security for the Sultan's compliance.

But, in the second week of June, the Despatch which brought to the Sultan a virtual alliance with England was already at Constantinople, and the English fleet was coming up from Malta to the mouth of the Dardanelles under orders to obey the word of the English Ambassador. Before the moment came for despatching an answer to Count Nesselrode's summons, both the French and the English fleets were at anchor close outside the Straits, in waters called Besica Bay. Thus supported, the Porte at once refused to give Russia the Note demanded; but, under Lord Stratford's counsel, it did this in terms of deferential courtesy, and in a way which left open a door to future negotiation.

Efforts to effect an accommodation.

In all the capitals of the five great Powers, as well as at Constantinople, great efforts were made to bring about an accommodation, and it is certain that at intervals, if not continually, the Emperor Nicholas sought the means of retreating without ridicule from the ground on which his violence had placed him. It might seem that this was a condition of things in which diplomacy ought to have been able to act with effect; but it is hard for any one acquainted with the Despatches to say that the Statesmen intrusted with the duty of labouring for this end were wanting in energy or in skill. It was

the Czar's ancient hatred of Sir Stratford Canning which defied the healing art. What Nicholas wanted was to be able to force upon the Porte some measure which was keenly disapproved by Lord Stratford; and if it could have been shown that the English Ambassador had led the Turks into an untenable ground, there would have been an opportunity of giving the Czar this gratification; but Lord Stratford's moderation had been so firmly maintained, his sight had been always so clear and just, and his advice had gone so close to the edge of what could safely be conceded by the Turks, that (without doing a gross wrong to the Sultan) it was hardly possible to contrive any way of giving the Czar a semblance of triumph over the English Ambassador.

Defective representation of France, Austria, and Prussia, at the Court of St Petersburg.

From this time and thenceforth down to the final rupture between Russia and the Western Powers, there was a cause of evil at work which was every day tending to draw the Czar on into danger. Austria, Prussia, and France were unfitly represented at St Petersburg. In order to understand the nature of this evil, it must be remembered that in the reign of Nicholas the society of the Russian capital was what in the last century used to go by the name of a "Court." It was a mere group of men and women gathered always around one centre, bending always their eyes on one man, and striving to divine his will. Moreover, the worshippers were always watching to see who was in favour and who was in dis-

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grace; and whoever was seen to be in favour with the Czar was brought into favour with all; and whoever was believed to have incurred the Czar's displeasure, was immediately forced to perceive that he had become displeasing to the rest of his fellow-creatures. Strange to say, the members of the diplomatic body were not exempt from these vicissitudes: if a foreign envoy felt obliged to offer resistance to the imperial will, his life was made cold and gloomy to him; and, on the other hand, he was sure to be well caressed if he chose to cringe to the Czar. This condition of society made it a matter of great moment for foreign States to be represented at St Petersburg by men of high spirit, by men endued with some strength of will, and carefully informed of the policy which was directing their Governments at home. Unhappily for the peace of Europe, France was represented at St Petersburg by M. de Castelbajac, and Prussia by General de Rochow. Both of these men, but especially M. de Castelbajac were better fitted for the seeking of favour than for the exertion of power. Count Mensdorf, the Austrian Envoy, was an honest soldier, but he had little or no training as a diplomatist, and it would seem that he was never well informed of the policy which his Government was following. Besides, he was forced by illness to absent himself from his post during a long and critical period. General de Rochow too was absent at one time; and there was an interval when both the Austrian and the Prussian legations

were left in charge of men who forgot or who did not understand their duty. The result was that whilst Austria, Prussia and France seemed honestly labouring to repress the violence of Russia by a policy of almost hostile resistance, the men who professed to represent them at St Petersburg were suffering themselves to become the mere courtiers of the Czar.

Sir Hamilton Seymour alone held language corresponding with the disapproval which the acts of the Czar were exciting in Central Europe, as well as in France and England. He alone represented at St Petersburg the judgment of the Four Powers. From the moment when the occupation of the Principalities was first threatened, he always treated it as an act perilous to the tranquillity of Europe, and always declined to give any measure of the extent to which it was likely to affect the relations between Russia and England. In using this wholesome language he was left without support from any of his colleagues.

Of course, in a literal way, the representatives of Austria, Prussia, and France obeyed their orders, and remonstrated when they were directed to do so; but the Czar was so prone to believe what he wished to be true, that diplomatists who were forced to make painful communications to his Government could easily do a great deal to blunt the edge of their instructions. So, although in Europe the Czar was isolated, yet in Europe, as represented at St Peters-

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burg, the true order of things was reversed. There, it was Sir Hamilton Seymour who stood alone. More than this, it was believed at St Petersburg that the delinquency of M. Castelbajac often went beyond mere inaction, and that when the Czar was pained and discouraged by the reserve or the warning language of the Queen's representative, he was accustomed to turn for solace to the complaisant Frenchman, who was always ready to assure him that Sir Hamilton Seymour's grave tone was the sheer whim of an obstinate Englishman.

The Czar's reliance upon the acquiescence of England.

The Emperor Nicholas had laid down for himself a rule which was always to guide his conduct upon the Eastern Question; and it seems to be certain that at this time, even in his most angry moments, he intended to cling to his resolve. What he had determined was, that no temptation should draw him into hostile conflict with England. He did not know that already he was breaking away from England, and rapidly going adrift. Persisting in the belief that the opposition which he had been encountering at Constantinople was the work of the English Ambassador, and of him alone, or at worst of the Foreign Office, he refused to accept the conviction that he was falling out with the English people, or even with the English Government. It was in vain that Lord Clarendon, in words as clear as day, disclosed the anger and the growing determination of the Cabinet. It was in vain that, by grave words and by pregnant reserve, Sir Hamilton Seymour strove to warn the

Czar of the danger which he was bringing upon his relations with England. The Czar imagined that he knew better. "My dear Sir Hamilton," Count Nesselrode seemed to say, "you have lived away from "your country so long that, forgive me, you do not "know its condition and temper. We do. We have "studied it. Your Foreign Office speaks as if we "did not know that England has her weak point. "My dear Sir Hamilton, we have mastered the "whole subject of the 'School of Manchester.' Cer- "tainly it cost us some trouble, but we have now "made out the difference between a 'Meeting' on a "Sunday morning, and a 'Meeting' on a Monday "night. Nothing escapes us. We comprehend the "Society of Friends. Pardon me, Sir Hamilton, for "saying so, but your country is notoriously engaged "in commerce. With that we shall not interfere."

In truth, the Czar's theory was, that the foreign policy of the English Government was dictated by the people, and that the people loved money, and for the sake of money loved peace. In other words, he thought that the English nation had undergone what historians term "corruption." As far as he could make out, the vast expanse of men and women which presented itself to his imagination under the name of "the people" was the same sort of thing as the crowd which went to hear a fierce speech against princes, and statesmen, and parliaments, and armies, and navies, and taxes. He also thought that the cheers which this crowd uttered at the end of sen-

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tences denouncing war, were proof of a settled determination to prevent any Government from ever again breaking the peace without stringent reasons. A deeper knowledge would have taught him that what the crowd applauded was not the mere doctrine, but the pure racy strenuous English, and the animating ferocity of the speaker: for, in speeches of this kind, praises of peace were always blended with rough attacks upon public men; and therefore, to a shallow observer, the hearers might seem to be lifting up their voices for peace and goodwill among men, when in reality they were only acknowledging the pleasantness of the sensation which is produced by hearing good invective. A prince of the Russian Emperor's breed might have known that, even if it be given in praise or in joy, the "hurrah" of a northern people has in it a sound of conflict. What it negatives and forbids is peace and rest. His battalions were destined to hear it some day, to know its import, and to blend it long afterwards with recollections of mist and slaughter, and the breaking strength of Russia. But to the mind of the Czar at this time, the cheering which greeted the thin phantom of the "Peace Party" imported a determination of the English people to abdicate their place in Europe; and in proportion as this belief fixed its hold upon his mind, the tranquillity of the world was brought into danger.

Another unhappy circumstance tended to keep the Czar in his fatal error. Lord Aberdeen was the

Prime Minister. He was a pure and upright statesman, and it can be said that the more closely he was known the more he was honoured; for his friends always saw in him higher qualities than he was able to disclose to the general world by writing, or by speech, or by action. It was his lot to do much towards bringing upon his country a great calamity. He drew down war by suffering himself to have an undue horror of it. With good and truly peaceful intentions, he was every day breaking down one of the surest of the safeguards which protected the peace of Europe. This he did by the dangerous language which he suffered himself to hold almost down to the time of Baron Brunnow's departure from London. If judges were to declare their horror of justice, and make it appear that they would be likely to shrink from the duty of passing sentence on one of their erring fellow-creatures, they would invite the world to pillage and murder; but they would be committing a fault less grave than that of which Lord Aberdeen was guilty. He was chief of the Government, intrusted with the forces of the State. To be chary of the use of means so puissant for good and for evil is one of the most solemn charges that can be cast upon man; but for a ruler to give out that the sword of the State will be in his hands a thing loathed and cast aside, is to be guilty of a dereliction of duty fraught with instant danger. To all who would listen, Lord Aberdeen used to say that he abhorred the very thought of war; and that he was

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sure it would not and could not occur. He caused men to believe that, except for weighty and solemn cause, no war would be undertaken with his concurrence. Relying on a Prime Minister's words, the Emperor Nicholas felt certain that Lord Aberdeen would not carry England into a war for the sake of a difference between the wording of a Note demanded by Prince Mentschikoff and the wording of a Note proposed by the Turks. It is true that Baron Brunnow had the sagacity to understand that imprudent and timid language, though coming from the lips of a Prime Minister, would not necessarily be binding upon the high-spirited people of England; and he, no doubt, warned his master accordingly, even at the time when he was conveying to him Lord Aberdeen's words of peace; but it was so delightful to the Czar to remain under the impression produced by the language of the English Prime Minister, and, moreover, this language was so closely in harmony with the apparent feelings of the active little crowd which he had mistaken for the "English "people," that he could not or would not forego his illusion.

It is believed that the errors of Lord Aberdeen did not end here. In a conversation between Lord Clarendon and Baron Brunnow, our Foreign Secretary, they say, spoke a plain, firm sentence, disclosing the dangers which the occupation of the Principalities would bring upon the relations between Russia and England. The wholesome words were flying to

St Petersburg. They would have destroyed the Czar's illusion, and they therefore bade fair to preserve the peace of Europe; but when Lord Aberdeen came to know what had been uttered, he insisted, they say, and insisted with effect, that Baron Brunnow should be requested to consider Lord Clarendon's words as unspoken. Of course, after a fatal revocation like this, it would be hard indeed to convince the Czar that his encroachment was provoking the grave resistance of England.

Orders for the occupation of the Principalities.

The Emperor Nicholas was alone, in his accustomed writing-room in the Palace of Czarskoe Selo, when he came to the resolve which followed upon the discomfiture of Prince Mentschikoff. He took no counsel. He rang a bell. Presently an officer of his Staff stood before him. To him he gave his orders for the occupation of the Principalities. Afterwards he told Count Orloff what he had done. Count Orloff became grave, and said, "This is war." The Czar was surprised to hear that the Count took so gloomy a view. He was sure that no country would stir against him without the concurrence of England, and he was certain that, because of her Peace Party, her traders, and her Prime Minister, it was impossible for England to move.

It was thus that by rashness and want of moderation men truly attached to the cause of peace were encouraging the wrong-doer, and rapidly bringing upon Europe the calamity which they most abhorred.

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The Pruth passed.

Russian Manifesto.

On the 2d July the Emperor Nicholas caused his forces to pass the Pruth, and laid hold of the two Principalities. On the following day a manifesto was read in the churches of All the Russias.* "It "is known," said the Czar, "to all our faithful sub- "jects that the defence of the Orthodox religion was "from time immemorial the vow of our glorious "forefathers. From the time that it pleased Provi- "dence to intrust to us our hereditary throne, the "defence of these holy obligations inseparable from "it was the constant object of our solicitude and "care; and these, based on the glorious treaty of "Kainardji, confirmed by other solemn treaties, were "ever directed to insure the inviolability of the "Orthodox Church. But to our great grief, recently, "in despite of our efforts to defend the inviolability "of the rights and privileges of our Orthodox Church, "various arbitrary acts of the Porte have infringed "these rights, and threaten at last the complete "overthrow of the long-perpetuated order so dear to "Orthodoxy. Having exhausted all persuasion, we "have found it needful to advance our armies into "the Danubian Principalities, in order to show the "Ottoman Porte to what its obstinacy may lead. "But even now we have not the intention to com- "mence war. By the occupation of the Principalities "we desire to have such a security as will insure "us the restoration of our rights. It is not conquest

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 357.

"that we seek; Russia needs it not; we seek satis- CHAP. XII.
"faction for a just right so clearly infringed. We
"are ready even now to arrest the movement of
"our armies, if the Ottoman Porte will bind itself
"solemnly to observe the inviolability of the Ortho-
"dox Church. But if blindness and obstinacy decide
"for the contrary, then, calling God to our aid, we
"shall leave the decision of the struggle to Him, and,
"in full confidence in His omnipotent right hand, we
"shall march forward for the Orthodox Church."*

Course taken by the Sultan.

By declaring that his military occupation of these provinces was not an act of war, the Emperor Nicholas did not escape from any part of the responsibility naturally attaching to the invasion of a neighbour's territory; and yet, by making this announcement, he committed the error of enabling the Porte to choose its own time for the final rupture. The Sultan was advised by Lord Stratford, and afterwards by the Home Governments of the Western Powers, that although he was entitled, if he chose, to look upon the seizure of the tributary provinces as a clear invasion of his territory, he was not obliged to treat it as an act which placed him at war, and that for the moment it was wise for him to hold back. Upon this counsel the Sultan acted; and in truth the latitude which it gave him was highly convenient, because he was ill-prepared for an immediate encounter. Therefore, without yet

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 323.

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Religious character of the threatened war.

going to a rupture, the Turkish Government exerted itself to make ready for war. In States religiously constituted, the preparation for war is begun by preaching it; and now in Europe, in Asia, and in Africa, wherever there were Turkish dominions, the Moslems were called to arms by a truculent course of sermons. In the churches of Russia there was a like appeal to the piety of the multitude. Of course the members of the two disputing Governments were much under the influence of temporal motives; but by the people of both Empires the war now believed to be impending was regarded as a war for Religion.

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Effect of the Czar's threat upon European Powers.

THE Czar had no sooner uttered his threat to occupy the Principalities, than he found himself met by the unanimous disapproval of the other great Powers of Europe. Nor was this a barren expression of opinion. From the time of the accomplishment of Count Leiningen's mission, Austria had never ceased to declare her adhesion to her accustomed policy; and the moment that she saw herself endangered by the Czar's determination to send troops into Wallachia and Moldavia, she became, as it was her interest and her duty to be, a resolute opponent of Russia. And her resistance was of more value than that of any other Power, because she was so placed in reference to the Principalities that, at any moment and without any very hard effort, she could make her will the law. Of course the Czar might resent the interference of Austria and declare war against her; but in such a case he would necessarily place the scene of hostilities upon another part of her frontier. It was not possible for him with common prudence to wind round the frontier of the Austrian Empire, and attempt to keep troops

Its effect upon Austria.

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in Wallachia, if he were liable to attack from Transylvania and the Banat.

Clearly, then, it rested with Austria to prevent or redress the threatened outrage. Her resolution was never doubtful. Before the end of May Count Buol represented at St Petersburg the danger of the proceedings adopted by Prince Mentschikoff;* and on the 17th of June he declared that he considered himself as "entirely united" with England in her policy towards the Turkish Empire, that he regarded "the maintenance of its independence and integrity "as of the most essential importance to the best "interests of Austria," and that he would employ all "the means in his power to effect that object." He promised that he would take no engagement with Russia not to oppose her "with arms;" and he added that "should he be called upon to carry out an "armed intervention on the frontiers, it would be in "support of the authority and independence of the "Sultan."**

Upon Prussia.

The opinion of Prussia was scarcely less decided. On the 30th of May Lord Bloomfield was able to report that the impression made upon the Government of Berlin by the last reports from Turkey was "most "unfavourable to the Russian Government;" and Baron Manteuffel declared that Prince Mentschikoff had gone far beyond everything that the Prussian Government had been given to expect, and he could

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 224.

** Ibid. p. 291.

hardly believe but that the Prince would be disavowed.* Three days later the Prussian Government conveyed this impression to the Court of St Petersburg;** and on the 7th Lord Clarendon expressed his satisfaction at the views taken and the course of the policy indicated both by the Court of Berlin and the Court of Vienna.***

Effect produced by the actual invasion of the Principalities.

This was the effect produced by the threat contained in Count Nesselrode's summons; but when the invasion of the Principalities took place, and came to be known in Europe, it quickly appeared that the uneasiness excited by the actual occurrence of the event was more than proportioned to that which sprang from the mere expectation of it. In Austria the uneasiness of the Government was so great that it dissolved the close relations of friendship lately subsisting between the Courts of Petersburg and Vienna; and within three days from the time when Russia crossed the Pruth, Count Buol, abandoning the notion of "acting singly," which had been entertained some days before,† began to lay the foundations of a league well fitted to repress the Czar's encroachment without plunging Europe in war.

In Austria.

"The entry of the Russian troops into the Princi-"palities," wrote Lord Westmoreland to the English Secretary of State, "is looked upon with the greatest

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 223.

** Ibid. p. 227.

*** Ibid. p. 230.

† Ibid. p. 320.

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"possible regret; and I am requested by Count Buol "to state this to your Lordship, as also to announce "to you his intention immediately to convey this "feeling to the Russian Cabinet, together with the "expression of the disappointment he has felt at the "sudden adoption of this measure while there still "existed the hope of an arrangement at Constanti- "nople. Count Buol expressed his entire satisfaction "with the language your Lordship had held to Count "Colloredo, agreeing as he does with the policy you "recommend, and with the necessity which would "arise, in case the invasion of the Principalities took "place, of concerting measures among the Powers "parties to the treaties of 1841, with the view of "obtaining from the Russian Cabinet the most dis- "tinct declarations as to the objects of that move- "ment, and the term which would be fixed for its "duration."*

In France and England.

On the other hand, the Governments of France and England, with less cause for anxiety about countries so remote as the provinces of the Lower Danube, were angrily impatient of the Czar's intrusion.

In Prussia.

Prussia, hitherto supposed to be hardly capable of differing with the Emperor Nicholas, did not fear to express her disapproval in decisive terms; and the Cabinet of Berlin instructed the King's Envoy at Constantinople to "unite cordially" with the representatives of Austria, France, and England.**

* "Eastern Papers," part i. p. 356.

** Ibid. p. 355.

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Attitude of Europe generally.

In short, the attitude of Europe towards the Russian Emperor was exactly that which a lover of peace and of order might desire to witness; for the wrong-doer was left without an ally in the world, and was resisted by the four great Powers, with the assent of the other States of Europe. It was plain, moreover, that this resistance would not evaporate in mere remonstrance or protest; for if Austria was the country most endangered by the seizure of the Principalities, she was also the Power which could most easily extirpate the evil, because, whenever she chose, she could fall upon the flank and rear of the Russian invaders by issuing through the passes of the Eastern Carpathian range, or the frontier which touched the Banat. Moreover, France and England, by bringing their fleets into the Levant, by causing them to approach the Dardanelles, by passing the Straits, by anchoring in the Golden Horn, by ascending the Bosphorus, by cruising in the Euxine, and, finally, by interdicting the Russian flag from its waters, could always inflict a graduated torture upon the Czar, and (even without going to the extremity of war) could make it impossible that the indignation of Europe should remain unheeded.

Concord of the four Powers.

Their means of repression.

Their joint measures.

The concord of the States opposing the Czar's encroachment was already so well perfected that, on the very day* when the Russian advance-guard crossed the Pruth, the representatives of the four

* 2d July 1853.

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Powers assembled in Conference, determined to address to Russia a collective Note pressing the Czar to put his claims against Turkey in conformity with the sovereign rights of the Sultan. Here was the very principle for which France and England had been contending; and it was obvious that if this concerted action of the four Powers should last, it would insure peace: for, in the first place, any resistance to their united will would be hopeless; and, on the other hand, a Prince whose spirit rebelled against the idea of yielding to States which he looked upon as adversaries, might gracefully give way to the award of assembled Europe. In short, the four Powers could coerce without making war; and the business of a statesman who sought to maintain the peace and good order of Europe was to keep them united, taking care that no mere shades of difference should part them, and that nothing short of a violent and irreconcilable change on the part of one or more of the Powers should dissolve a confederacy, which promised to insure the continuance of peace and a speedy enforcement of justice.

Importance of maintaining close concert between the four Powers.

How came it to happen that in the midst of all this harmony there supervened a policy which discarded the principle of a peaceful coercion applied by the whole of the remonstrant Powers, and raised up in its stead a threatening alliance which was powerful enough to wage a bloody and successful war, but was without that more wholesome measure of strength which can enforce justice without in-

flicting humiliation, and without resort to arms? How came it to happen that within six days from the date of the collective Note, and without the intervening occurrence of any new event, the concert of the four Powers was suddenly superseded and paralysed by the announcement of a separate understanding between two of them?

It was not for reasons of State that by one of the high contracting parties this evil course was designed; and in order to see how it came to be possible that the vast interests of Europe should be set aside in favour of mere personal objects, it will presently be necessary to contract the field of vision, and, going back to the winter of 1851, to glance at the operations of a small knot of middle-aged men who were pushing their fortunes in Paris.

CHAPTER XIV.

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State of the French Republic in Nov. 1851.

In the beginning of the winter of 1851 France was still a republic; but the Constitution of 1848 had struck no root. There was a feeling that the country had been surprised and coerced into the act of declaring itself a republic, and that a monarchical system of government was the only one adapted for France. The sense of instability which sprang from this belief was connected with an agonising dread of insurrections like those which, forty months before, had filled the streets of Paris with scenes of bloodshed. Moreover, to those who watched and feared, it seemed that the shadow on the dial was moving on with a terrible steadiness to the hour when a return to anarchy was, as it were, preordained by law; for the Constitution required that a new President should be chosen in the spring of the following year, and the French, being by nature of a keen and anxious temperament, cannot endure that lasting pressure upon the nerves which is inflicted by a long-impending danger. Their impulse under such trials is to rush forward, or to run back, and what they are least inclined to do is to stand

still and be calm, or make a steady move to the front.

In general, France thought it best that, notwithstanding the Rule of the Constitution which stood in the way, the then President should be quietly re-elected; and a large majority of the Assembly, faithfully representing this opinion, had come to a vote which sought to give it effect; but their desire was baffled by an unwise provision of the Republican Charter, which had laid it down that no constitutional change should take place without the sanction of three-fourths of the Assembly. By this clumsy bar the action of the State system was hampered, and many, whose minds generally inclined them to respect legality, were forced to acknowledge that the Constitution wanted a wrench. Still, the republic had long been free from serious outbreak. The law was obeyed; and indeed the determination to maintain order at all sacrifices was so strong that, even upon somewhat slight foundation, the President had been intrusted with power to place under martial law any districts in which disturbances seemed likely to occur. The struggles which went on in the Chamber, though they were unsightly in the eyes of military men and of those who love the decisiveness and consistency of despotism, were rather signs of healthy political action than of danger to the State. It is not true, as was afterwards pretended, that the Executive was wickedly or perversely thwarted either by the votes of the Assembly or by the speeches of its members;

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still less is it true that the representative body was engaged in hatching plots against the President; and although the army, remembering the humiliations of 1848, was in ill-humour with the people, and was willing upon any fit occasion to act against them, there was no general officer of any repute who would consent to fire a shot without what French Commanders deemed to be the one lawful warrant for action — an order from the Minister of War.

Prince Louis Bonaparte.

But the President of the republic was Prince Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, the statutory heir of the first French Emperor.* The election which made him the chief of the State had been conducted with perfect fairness; and since it happened that in former years he had twice engaged in enterprises which aimed at the throne of France, he had good right to infer that the millions of citizens who elected him into the Presidency were willing to use his ambition as a means of restoring to France a monarchical form of government.

But if he had been open in disclosing the ambition which was almost cast upon him by the circumstances of his birth, he had been as successful as the first Brutus in passing for a man of a poor intellect. Both in France and in England, at that time, men in general imagined him to be dull. When he talked, the flow of his ideas was sluggish: his features were opaque; and, after years of dreary studies, the

* *i. e.*, by the Senatus-Consulte of 1804.

writings evolved by his thoughtful, long-pondering mind had not shed much light on the world. Even the strange ventures in which he had engaged had failed to win towards him the interest which commonly attaches to enterprise. People in London who were fond of having gatherings of celebrated characters never used to present him to their friends as a serious pretender to a throne, but rather as though he were a balloon-man who had twice had a fall from the skies, and was still in some measure alive. Yet the more men knew him in England, the more they liked him. He entered into English pursuits, and rode fairly to hounds. He was friendly, social, good-humoured, and willing enough to talk freely about his views upon the throne of France. The sayings he uttered about his "destiny" were addressed (apparently as a matter of policy) to casual acquaintance; but to his intimate friends he used the language of a calculating and practical aspirant to Empire.

The opinion which men had formed of his ability in the period of exile was not much altered by his return to France: for in the Assembly his apparent want of mental power caused the world to regard him as harmless, and in the chair of the President he commonly seemed to be torpid. But there were always a few who believed in his capacity; and observant men had latterly remarked that from time to time there appeared a State Paper, understood to be the work of the President, which teemed with thought

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and which showed that the writer, standing solitary and apart from the gregarious nation of which he was the chief, was able to contemplate it as something external to himself. His long, endless study of the mind of the First Napoleon had caused him to adopt and imitate the Emperor's habit of looking down upon the French people, and treating the mighty nation as a substance to be studied and controlled by a foreign brain. Indeed, during the periods of his imprisonment and of his exile, the relations between him and the France of his studies were very like the relations between an anatomist and a corpse. He lectured upon it; he dissected its fibres; he explained its functions; he showed how beautifully Nature, in her infinite wisdom, had adapted it to the service of the Bonapartes; and how, without the fostering care of those same Bonapartes, the creature was doomed to degenerate, and to perish out of the world.

If his intellect was of a poorer quality than men supposed it to be at the time of the Anglo-French alliance, it was much above the low gauge which people used to assign to it in the earlier period which began in 1836 and ended at the close of 1851. That which had so long veiled his cleverness from the knowledge of mankind, was the repulsive nature of the science at which he laboured. Many men before him had suffered themselves to bring craft into politics; many more, toiling in humbler grades, had applied their cunning skill to the conflicts which engage courts of law; but no living man perhaps,

except Prince Louis Bonaparte, had passed the hours of a studious youth, and the prime of a thoughtful manhood, in contriving how to apply stratagem to the science of jurisprudence. It was not, perhaps, from natural baseness that his mind took this bent. The inclination to sit and sit planning for the attainment of some object of desire — this, indeed, was in his nature; but the inclination to labour at the task of making law an engine of deceit — this did not come perforce with his blood. Yet it came with his parentage. It is true, he might have determined to reject the indication given him by the accident of his birth, and to remain a private citizen; but when once he resolved to become a pretender to the imperial throne, he of course had to try and see how it was possible — how it was possible in the midst of this century — that the coarse Bonaparte yoke of 1804 could be made to sit kindly upon the neck of France; and France being a European nation, and the yoke being in substance a yoke such as Tartars make for Chinese, it followed that the accommodating of the one to the other was only to be effected by guile.

Therefore, by the sheer exigencies of his inheritance rather than by inborn wickedness, Prince Louis was driven to be a contriver; and to expect him to be loyal to France without giving up his pretensions altogether, would be as inconsistent as to say that the heir of the first Perkin might undertake to revive

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the fleeting glories of the House of Warbeck, and yet refrain from imposture.

For years the Prince pursued his strange calling, and by the time his studies were over he had become highly skilled. Long before the moment had come for bringing his crooked science into use, he had learnt how to frame a Constitution which should seem to enact one thing and really enact another. He knew how to put the word "jury" in laws which robbed men of their freedom; he could set the snare which he called "universal suffrage;" he knew how to strangle a nation in the night-time with a thing he called a "Plebiscite."

The lawyer-like ingenuity which had thus been evoked for purposes of jurisprudence could, of course, be applied to the composition of State Papers and to political writings of all kinds; and the older Prince Louis grew, the more this odd accomplishment of his was used to subserve his infirmities. It was his nature to remain long in suspense, not merely between similar, but even between opposite plans of action. This weakness grew upon him with his years; and his conscience being used to stand neuter in these mental conflicts, he never could end his doubt by seeing that one course was honest and the other not; so, in order to be able to linger safely in his suspense, he had to be always making resting-places upon which for a time he might be able to stand undecided. Just as the indolent man becomes clever

in framing excuses for his delays, so Prince Louis, because he was so often hesitating between the right and the left, became highly skilled in contriving not merely ambiguous phrases, but ambiguous schemes of action.

Partly from habits acquired in the secret societies of the Italian Carbonari, partly from long years passed in prison, and partly too, as he once said, from his intercourse with the calm, self-possessed men of the English turf, he had derived the power of keeping long silence; but he was not by nature a reserved nor a secret man. Towards foreigners, and especially towards the English, he was generally frank. He was reserved and wary with the French, but this was upon the principle which makes a sportsman reserved and wary with deer and partridges and trout. No doubt, he was capable of dissembling, and continuing to dissemble through long periods of time; but it would seem that his faculty of keeping his intentions secret was very much aided by the fact that his judgment was often in real suspense, and that he had therefore no secret to tell. His love of masks and disguises sprang more, perhaps, from the odd vanity and the theatric mania which will be presently spoken of, than from a base love of deceit; for it is certain that the mystery in which he loved to wrap himself up was often contrived with a view to a melodramatic surprise.

It is believed that men do him wrong who speak of him as void of all idea of truth. He understood

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truth, and in conversation he habitually preferred it to falsehood; but his truthfulness (though not perhaps contrived for such an end) sometimes became a means of deception, because, after generating confidence, it would suddenly break down under the pressure of a strong motive. He could maintain friendly relations with a man, and speak frankly and truthfully to him for seven years, and then suddenly deceive him. Of course, men, finding themselves ensnared by what had appeared to be honesty in his character, were naturally inclined to believe that every semblance of a good quality was a mask; but it is more consistent with the principles of human nature to believe that a truthfulness continuing for seven years was a genuine remnant of virtue, than that it was a mere preparation for falsehood. His doubting and undecided nature was a help to concealment; for men got so wearied by following the oscillations of his mind that their suspicions in time went to rest; and then, perhaps, when he saw that they were quite tired of predicting that he would do a thing, he gently stole out and did it.

He had boldness of the kind which is produced by reflection rather than that which is the result of temperament. In order to cope with the extraordinary perils into which he now and then thrust himself, and to cope with them decorously, there was wanted a fiery quality which nature had refused to the great bulk of mankind as well as to him. But it was only in emergencies of a really trying sort, and involving

instant physical danger, that his boldness fell short. He had all the courage which would have enabled him in a private station of life to pass through the common trials of the world with honour unquestioned; but he had besides, now and then, a factitious kind of audacity produced by long dreamy meditation; and when he had wrought himself into this state, he was apt to expose his firmness to trials beyond his strength. The truth is, that his imagination had so great a sway over him as to make him love the idea of enterprises, but it had not strength enough to give him a foreknowledge of what his sensations would be in the hour of trial. So he was most venturesome in his schemes for action; and yet, when at last he stood face to face with the very danger which he had long been courting, he was liable to be scared by it, as though it were something new and strange.

He loved to contrive and brood over plots, and he had a great skill in making the preparatory arrangements for bringing his schemes to ripeness; but his labours in this direction had a tendency to bring him into scenes for which by nature he was ill-fitted, because, like most of the common herd of men, he was unable to command the presence of mind and the flush of animal spirits which are needed for the critical moments of a daring adventure. In short, he was a thoughtful, literary man, deliberately tasking himself to venture into a desperate path, and going great lengths in that direction; but liable to

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find himself balked in the moment of trial by the sudden and chilling return of his good sense.

He was not by nature bloodthirsty nor cruel, and besides that in small matters he had kind and generous instincts, he was really so willing to act fairly until the motive for foul play was strong, that for months and months together he was able to live amongst English sporting-men without incurring disgrace; and if he was not so constituted nor so disciplined as to be able to refrain from any object of eager desire merely upon the theory that what he sought to do was wicked, there is ground for inferring that his perception of the difference between right and wrong had been dimmed (as it naturally would be) by the habit of seeking an ideal of manly worth in a personage like the First Bonaparte. It would seem that (as a study, or out of curiosity, if not with a notion of being guided by it) he must have accustomed himself to hear sometimes what conscience had to say; for it is certain that, with a pen in his hand and with sufficient time for preparation, he could imitate very neatly the scrupulous language of a man of honour.*

* See *inter alia* his address to the Electors, 29th Nov. 1848; his speech, read after taking the oath, 20th Dec. 1848; speech at Ham, 22d July 1849; ditto at Tours, 1st Aug. 1849; message to the Chambers, 3d Dec. 1849; ditto, 12th Nov. 1850. It will be seen (see *post*) that, according to my view, these declarations may have been composed at a time when he was really shrinking from treason; but if, as others suppose, they were intended to hoodwink the country, it must be owned

What he always longed for was to be able to seize and draw upon himself the wondering attention of mankind; and the accident of his birth having marked out for him the throne of the First Napoleon as an object upon which he might fasten a hope, his craving for conspicuousness, though it had its true root in vanity, soon came to resemble ambition; but the mental isolation in which he was kept by the nature of his aims and his studies, the seeming poverty of his intellect, his blank wooden looks, and above all, perhaps, the supposed remoteness of his chances of success — these sources of discouragement, contrasting with the grandeur of the object at which he aimed, caused his pretension to be looked upon as something merely comic and odd. Linked with this his passionate desire to attain to a height from which he might see the world gazing up at him, there was a strong and almost eccentric fondness for the artifices by which the framer of a melodrama, the stage-manager, and the stage-hero combine to produce their effects; and so, by the blended force of a passion and a fancy, he was impelled to be contriving scenic effects and surprises in which he himself was always to be the hero. This bent was so strong and dominant as to be not a mere taste for theatric arrangements, but rather what men call a propensity. Standing alone, it would have done no more, perhaps, than govern the character of his amusements; but

that they counterfeited the sentiments of an honest man with extraordinary skill.

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since his birth had made him a pretender to the throne of France, his desire to imitate and reproduce the Empire supplied a point of contact between his theatric mania and what one may call his rational ambition; and the result was, that so long as he was in exile he was always filled with a desire to mimic Napoleon's return from Elba, and to do this in his own person and upon the stage of the actual world.

In some of its features his attempt at Strasburg in 1836 was a graver business than is commonly supposed. At that time he was twenty-eight years old. He had gained over Vaudrey, the officer commanding a regiment of artillery which formed part of the garrison. Early in the morning of Sunday the 30th of October the movement began. By declaring that a revolution had broken out in Paris, and that the King had been deposed, Vaudrey persuaded his gunners to recognise the Prince as Napoleon II. Vaudrey then caused detachments to march to the houses of the Prefect and of General Voirol, the General commanding the garrison, and made them both prisoners, placing sentries at their doors. All this he achieved without alarming any of the other regiments.

Supposing that there really existed among the troops a deep attachment to the name and family of Bonaparte, little more seemed needed for winning over the whole garrison than that the heir of the great Emperor should have the personal qualities

requisite for the success of the enterprise. Prince Louis was brought into the presence of the captive General, and tried to gain him over, but was repulsed. Afterwards the Prince, surrounded with men personating an imperial staff, was conducted to the barrack of the 46th Regiment; and the men, taken entirely by surprise, were told that the person now introduced to them was their Emperor. What they saw was a young man with the bearing and countenance of a weaver — a weaver oppressed by long hours of monotonous indoor work, which makes the body stoop and keeps the eyes downcast; but all the while — and yet it was broad daylight — this young man, from hat to boot, was standing dressed up in the historic costume of the man of Austerlitz and Marengo. It seems that this painful exhibition began to undo the success which Vaudrey had achieved; but strange things had happened in Paris before, and the soldiery could not with certainty know that the young man might not be what they were told he was — Napoleon II., the new-made Emperor of the French. Their perplexity gave the Prince an opportunity of trying whether the sentiment for the Bonapartes were really existing or not, and if it were, whether he was the man to kindle it.

But by-and-by Talandier, the Colonel of the regiment, having been at length apprised of what was going on, came into the yard. He instantly ordered the gates to be closed, and then — fierce, angry, and scornful — went straight up to the spot where the

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proposed Emperor and his "Imperial Staff" were standing. Of course this apparition — the apparition of the indignant Colonel whose barrack had been invaded — was exactly what was to be expected, exactly what was to be combated; but yet, as though it were something monstrous and undreamt of, it came upon the Prince with a crushing power. To him, a literary man, standing in a barrack-yard in the dress of the great conqueror, an angry Colonel, with authentic warrant to command, was something real, and therefore, it seems, dreadful. In a moment Prince Louis succumbed to him. Some thought that, after what had been done that morning, the Prince owed it to the unfortunate Vaudrey (whom he had seduced into the plot) to take care not to let the enterprise collapse without testing his fortune to the utmost by a strenuous, not to say desperate resistance; but this view did not prevail. One of the ornaments which the Prince wore was a sword; yet, without striking a blow, he suffered himself to be publicly stripped of his grand cordon of the Legion of Honour and all his other decorations.* According to one account, the angry Colonel inflicted this dishonour with his own hands, and not only pulled the grand cordon from the Prince's bosom, but tore off his

* Despatch of General Voirol, *Moniteur*, 2d Nov. After stating the arrival of Lt.-Col. Talandier in the barrack-yard, the despatch says, "Dans une minute L. N. Bonaparte et les misérables qui avaient pris "parti pour lui ont été arretés, et les décorations dont ils étaient "revêtus ont été arrachées par les soldats du 46me."

epaulettes, and trampled both epaulettes and grand cordon under foot. When he had been thus stripped the Prince was locked up. The decorated followers, who had been impersonating the Imperial Staff, underwent the same fate as their chief. Before judging the Prince for his conduct during these moments, it would be fair to assume that, the Colonel having once been suffered to enter the yard, and to exert the ascendancy of his superior firmness, the danger of attempting resistance to him would have been great — would have been greater than any which the common herd of men are at all inclined to encounter. Besides, the mere fact that the Prince had wilfully brought himself into such a predicament shows that, although it might fail him in very trying moments, he had extraordinary daring of a particular kind. It would be unjust to say flatly that a man so willing as he was to make approaches to dangers was timid; it would be fairer to say that his characteristic was a faltering boldness. He could not alter his nature, and his nature was to be venturesome beforehand, but to be so violently awakened and shocked by the actual contact of dangers as to be left without the spirit, and seemingly without the wish or the motives, for going on any farther with the part of a desperado. The truth is, that the sources of his boldness were his vanity and his theatric bent; and these passions, though they had power to bring him to the verge of danger, were not robust enough to hold good against man's natural shrinking

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from the risk of being killed — being killed within the next minute. Conscious that in point of hat and coat and boots he was the same as the Emperor Napoleon, he imagined that the great revoir of 1815 between the men and the man of a hundred fights could be acted over again between modern French troops and himself; but it is plain that this belief had resulted from the undue mastery which he had allowed for a time to his ruling propensity, and not from any actual overthrow of the reason; for, when checked, he did not, like a madman or a dare-devil, try to carry his venture through; nor did he even, indeed, hold on long enough to try, and try fairly, whether the Bonapartist sentiment to which he wished to appeal were really existent or not: on the contrary, the moment he encountered the shock of the real world he stopped dead; and, becoming suddenly quiet, harmless, and obedient, surrendered himself (as he always has done) to the first firm man who touched him. The change was like that seeming miracle which is wrought when a hysteric girl, who seems to be carried headlong by strange hallucinations, and to be clothed with the terrible power of madness, is suddenly cured and silenced by a rebuke and a sharp angry threat. Accepting a small sum of money* from the Sovereign whom he had been trying to dethrone, Prince Louis was shipped off to America by the good-natured King of the French.

* £600.

But if he was wanting in the quality which enables a man to go well through with a venture, his ruling propensity had strength enough to make him try the same thing over and over again. His want of the personal qualifications for enterprises of this sort being now known in the French Army, and ridicule having fastened upon his name, he could not afterwards seduce into his schemes any officers of higher rank than a lieutenant. Yet he did not desist. Before long he was planning another "return "from Elba," but this time with new dresses and decorations. So long as he was preparing counterfeit flags and counterfeit generals and counterfeit soldiers,* and teaching a forlorn London bird to play the part of an omen and guide the destiny of France, he was perfectly at home in that kind of statesmanship; and the framing of the plebiscites and proclamations, which formed a large part of his cargo, was a business of which he was master; but if his arrangements should take effect, then what he had to look for was, that at an early hour on a summer morning he would find himself in a barrack-yard at Boulogne surrounded by a band of armed followers, and supported by one of the officers of the garrison whom he had previously gained over; but also having to do with a number of soldiery, of

* The dresses were made to counterfeit the uniform of the 42d, one of the regiments quartered at Boulogne; and buttons having on them the number of the regiment were forged for the purpose at Birmingham.

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whom some would be for him and some inclining against him, and others confused and perplexed. Now, this was exactly what happened to him: his arrangements had been so skilful, and fortune had so far lured him on, that whither he meant to go, there he was at last, standing in the very circumstances which he had brought about with long design aforethought. But then his nature failed him. Becoming agitated, and losing his presence of mind,* he could not govern the result of the struggle by the resources of his intellect; and being also without the fire and the joyfulness which come to warlike men in moments of crisis and of danger, he was ill qualified to kindle the hearts of the bewildered soldiery. So, when at last a firm, angry officer** forced his way into the barrack-yard, he conquered the Prince almost instantly by the strength of a more resolute nature, and turned him out into the street, with all his fifty armed followers, with his flag and his eagle,*** and his counterfeit headquarters Staff, as though he were dealing with a mere troop of strolling players.† Yet only a few weeks afterwards this same Prince Louis Napoleon was able to show, by his demeanour before the Chamber of Peers,

* This is his own explanation of his state given before the Chamber of Peers. The flutter he was in caused him, as he explained, to let his pistol go off without intending it, and to hit a soldier who was not taking part against him. — *Moniteur* for 1840, p. 2031-2034.

** Captain Col. Puygellier.

*** The eagle here spoken of is the wooden one.

† *Moniteur*, ubi ante.

that where the occasion gave him leisure for thought, and for the exercise of mental control, he knew how to comport himself with dignity, and with a generous care for the safety and welfare of his followers.

It was natural that a man thus constituted should be much inclined to linger in the early stages of a plot; but since it chanced that by his birth and by his ambition Prince Napoleon was put forward before the world as a pretender to the throne of France, he had always had around him a few keen adventurers who were willing to partake his fortunes; and if there were times when his personal wishes would have inclined him to choose repose or indefinite delay, he was too considerate in his feelings towards his little knot of followers to be capable of forgetting their needs.

His overtures to the gentlemen of France at the time when he was President.

In 1851, motives of this kind, joined with feelings of disappointment and of personal humiliation, were driving the President forward. He had always wished to bring about a change in the Constitution, but originally he had hoped to be able to do this with the aid and approval of some at least of the statesmen and eminent generals of the country; and the fact of his desiring such concurrence in his plans seems to show that he did not at first intend to trample upon France by subjecting her to a sheer Asiatic despotism, but rather to found such a monarchy as might have the support of men of station and character. But besides that few people believed him to be so able a man as he really was,

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there attached to him at this period a good deal of ridicule. So, although there were numbers in France who would have been heartily glad to see the Republic crushed by some able dictator, there were hardly any public men who believed that in the President of the Republic they would find the man they wanted. Therefore his overtures to the gentlemen of France were always rejected. Every statesman to whom he applied refused to entertain his proposals. Every general whom he urged always said that for whatever he did he must have "an order from the Minister of War."

Is rebuffed, and falls into other hands.

The President being thus rebuffed, his plan of changing the form of government with the assent of some of the leading statesmen and generals of the country degenerated into schemes of a very different kind; and at length he fell into the hands of persons of the quality of Persigny, Morny, and Fleury. With these men he plotted; and, strangely enough, it happened that the character and the pressing wants of his associates gave strength and purpose to designs which, without this stimulus, might have long remained mere dreams. The President was easy and generous in the use of money, and he gave his followers all he could; but the checks created by the constitution of the Republic were so effective, that beyond the narrow limit allowed by law he was without any command of the State resources. In their inveterate love of strong government, the Republicans had placed within reach of the Chief of

Motives which pressed him forward.

the State ample means for overthrowing their whole structure, and yet they allowed him to remain subject to the same kind of anxiety, and to be driven to the same kind of expedients, as an embarrassed tradesman. This was the President's actual plight; and if he looked to the future as designed for him by the Constitution, he could see nothing but the prospect of having to step down on a day already fixed, and descend from a conspicuous station into poverty and darkness. He would have been content, perhaps, to get what he needed by fair means. In the beginning of the year he had tried hard to induce the Chambers to increase the funds placed at his disposal. He failed. From that moment it was to be expected that, even if he himself should still wish to keep his hands from the purse of France, his associates, becoming more and more impatient, and more and more practical in their views, would soon press their chief into action.

He declares for universal suffrage.

The President had been a promoter of the law of the 31st of May restricting the franchise, but he now became the champion of universal suffrage. To minds versed in politics this change might have sufficed to disclose the nature of the schemes upon which the Chief of the State was brooding; but from first to last, words tending to allay suspicion had been used with great industry and skill. From the moment of his coming before the public in February 1848, the Prince laid hold of almost every occasion he could find for vowing again and again that he harboured

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His solemn declarations of loyalty to the Republic.

no schemes against the Constitution. The speech which he addressed to the Assembly in 1850* may be taken as one instance out of numbers of these solemn and volunteered declarations.** He "con-"sidered," he said, "as great criminals, those who "by personal ambition compromised the small amount "of stability secured by the Constitution; . . . that "if the Constitution contained defects and dangers, "the Assembly was competent to expose them to the "eyes of the country; but that he alone, bound by "his oath, restrained himself within the strict limits "traced by that act." He declared that "the first "duty of authorities was to inspire the people with "respect for the law by never deviating from it them-"selves; and that his anxiety was not, he assured "the Assembly, to know who would govern France "in 1852, but to employ the time at his disposal, so "that the transition, whatever it might be, should be "effected without agitation or disturbance; for," said he, "the noblest object, and the most worthy of an "exalted mind, is not to seek when in power how to "perpetuate it, but to labour inseparably to fortify, "for the benefit of all, those principles of authority "and morality which defy the passions of mankind "and the instability of laws."

It was thus that, in language well contrived for winning belief, he repudiated as wicked and preposterous the notion of his being the man who would

* 13th November.

** See an enumeration of a few of these given *ante*.

or could act against the Constitution; and supposing that when he voluntarily made these declarations he had resolved to do what he afterwards did, he would have been guilty of deceit more than commonly black; but perhaps an appreciation of the room which he had in his mind for double and conflicting views, and a knowledge of his hesitating nature, and of the pressing wants of the associates by whom he was surrounded, may justify the more friendly view of those who imagine that, when he made all these solemn declarations, he was really shrinking from treason. Certainly, his words were just such as may have pictured the real thoughts of a goaded man at times when he had determined to make a stand against hungry and resolute followers who were keenly driving him forward.

It was natural that, in looking at the operation which changed the Republic into an Empire, the attention of the observer should be concentrated upon the person who, already the Chief of the State, was about to attain to the throne; and there seems to be no doubt that what may be called the literary part of the transaction was performed by the President in person. He was the lawyer of the confederacy. He no doubt wrote the Proclamations, the Plebiscites, and the Constitutions, and all suchlike things; but it seems that the propelling power which brought the plot to bear was mainly supplied by Count de Morny, and by a resolute Major named Fleury.

M. Morny was a man of great daring, and gifted **Morny.**

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with more than common powers of fascination. He had been a member of the Chamber of Deputies in the time of the monarchy; but he was rather known to the world as a speculator than as a politician. He was a buyer and seller of those fractional and volatile interests in trading adventures which go by the name of "shares;" and since it has chanced that the nature of some of his transactions has been brought to light by the public tribunals, it is probable that the kind of repute in which he is held may be owing in part to those disclosures.* He knew how to found a "company," and he now undertook to establish institutions which were destined to be more lucrative to him than any of his former adventures. M. Morny was a practical man. If Prince Louis Napoleon was going to be content with a visionary life, thinking fondly of the hour when grateful France would come of her own accord and salute him Emperor, M. Morny was not the sort of person who would consent to stand loitering with him in the hungry land of dreams.

Fleury.

It seems, however, that the man who was the most able to make the President act, to drive him deep into his own plot, and fiercely carry him through it, was Major Fleury. Fleury was young, but his life had been checkered. He was the son of a Paris tradesman, from whom at an early age he had in-

* The trials here referred to are the action for libel against M. Cabrol, Tribunal of the Seine, January 21 and June 30, 1853; and the suit instituted by the shareholders of the "Constitutionnel" against Veron, Mirès, and Morny.

herited a pleasant sum of money. He plunged into the enjoyments of Paris with so much ardour that that phase of his career was soon cut short; but whilst his father's friends were no doubt lamenting ten times a-day that the boy had "eaten his fortune," young Fleury was at the foot of a ladder which was destined to give him a control over the fate of a mighty nation. He enlisted in the army as a common soldier; but the officers of his corps were so well pleased with the young man, and so admired the high spirit with which he met his change of fortune, that their goodwill soon caused him to be raised from the ranks. It was perhaps his knowledge about horses which first caused him to be attached to the Staff of the President.

From his temperament and his experience of life it resulted that Fleury cared a great deal for money, or the things which money can buy, and was not at all disposed to stand still and go without it. He was daring and resolute, and his daring was of the kind which holds good in the moment of danger. If Prince Louis Bonaparte was bold and ingenious in designing, Fleury was the man to execute. The one was skilful in preparing the mine and laying the train; the other was the man standing by with a lighted match, and determined to touch the fuse. The support of such a comrade as Fleury in the barrack-yard at Strasburg or at Boulogne might have brought many lives into danger, but it would have prevented the enterprise from coming to a ridiculous

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end. In truth, the nature of the one man was the complement of the nature of the other; and between them they had a set of qualities so puissant for dealing a sudden blow, that, working together, and with all the appliances of the Executive Government at their command, they were a pair who might well be able to make a strange dream come true. It would seem that from the moment when Fleury became a partaker of momentous secrets, the President ceased to be free. At all events, he would have found it costly to attempt to stand still.

Fleury searches in Algeria and finds St Arnaud.

The language held by the generals who declared that they would act under the authority of the Minister of War, and not without it, suggested the contrivance which was resorted to. Fleury determined to find a military man capable of command, capable of secrecy, and capable of a great venture. The person chosen was to be properly sounded, and, if he seemed willing, was to be admitted into the plot. He was then to be made Minister of War, in order that through him the whole of the land-forces should be at the disposal of the plotters. Fleury went to Algeria to find the instrument required; and he so well performed his task that he hit upon a general officer who was christened, it seems, Jacques Arnaud Le Roy, but was known at this time as Achille St Arnaud. Of some of the adventures of this person it will be right to speak hereafter. *

* In Volume III.

There was nothing in his past life, nor in his then plight, which made it at all dangerous for Fleury to approach him with the words of a suborner. He readily entered into the plot. From the moment that Prince Louis Bonaparte and his associates had intrusted their secret to the man of Fleury's selection, it was perhaps hardly possible for them to flinch; for the exigencies of St Arnaud, formerly Le Roy, were not likely to be on so modest a scale as to consist with the financial arrangements of a Republic governed by law; and the discontent of a person of his quality, with a secret like that in his charge, would plainly bring the rest of the brethren into danger. He was made Minister of War. This was on the 27th of October.

St Arnaud is suborned and made Minister of War.

At the same time M. Maupas, or De Maupas, was brought into the Ministry. In the previous July this person had been Prefect of the Department of the Upper Garonne. Of him his friends say that he had property, and that he has never been used to obtain money dishonestly. His zeal had led him to desire that thirty-two persons, including three members of the Council-General, should be seized and thrown into prison on a charge of conspiring against the Government. The legal authorities of the department refused to suffer this, because they said there was no ground for the charge. Then this Maupas, or De Maupas, proposed that the want of all ground for accusing the men should be supplied by a stratagem, and with that view he deliberately offered to arrange

Maupas.

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that incriminating papers and arms and grenades should be secretly placed in the houses of the men whom he wanted to have accused. Naturally the legal authorities of the department were horror-struck by the proposal, and they denounced the Prefect to the Keeper of the Seals. Maupas was ordered to Paris.* From the indignant and scornful presence of M. Faucher he came away sobbing, and people who knew the truth supposed him to be for ever disgraced and ruined; but he went and told his sorrows to the President. The President of course instantly saw that the man could be suborned. He admitted him into the plot, and on the 27th of October appointed him Prefect of Police.

He is suborned and made Prefect of Police.

Persigny.

Persigny, properly Fialin, was in the plot. He was descended, on one side, of an ancient family, and, disliking his father's name, he seems to have called himself for many years after the name of his maternal grandfather.** He began life as a non-commissioned officer. As he himself said,*** his instinct was "to serve;" and at first he served the Legitimists, but chance brought him into contact with Louis Bonaparte, and he very soon became the attached friend of the Prince, and his partner in all his plans and

* See the "Bulletin Français," p. 98 *et seq.* This publication appeared under auspices which make it a safe authority. It is to be regretted that its statements extend to only a portion of the events connected with the 2d of December.

** This, I think, was the account which he gave upon his trial in 1840. He was tried by the description of Fialin *dit* Persigny.

*** Before the Chamber of Peers, 1840.

adventures. If Morny was merely taking up the Bonaparte cause as one of many other money speculations, Persigny could truly say that he had made it for years his profession, and had even tried as well as he could to raise it to the dignity of a real political principle. But the part intrusted to Persigny on this occasion, though possibly an important one, was not of a conspicuous sort. It is said that, the firmness of the Prince Louis Bonaparte being distrusted by his comrades, Persigny, who was of a sanguine, hopeful nature, was to remain constantly at the Elysée in order to receive the tidings which would be coming in during the period of danger, and prevent them from reaching the President in such a way as to shake him and cause despondency. At all events, it would seem that the hand of Persigny was not the hand employed to execute the measures of the Elysée; and to this circumstance he owes it that he will not always have to stand in the same sentences with Morny, and Fleury, and Maupas, and St Arnaud, formerly Le Roy.

Contrivance for paralysing the National Guard.

It was necessary to take measures for paralysing the National Guard; but the force was under the command of General Perrot, a man whose honesty could not be tampered with. To dismiss him suddenly would be to excite suspicion. The following expedient was adopted: The President appointed as Chief of the Staff of the National Guard a person named Vieyra. The past life and the then repute of this person were of such a kind, that General Perrot,

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it seems, conceived himself insulted by the nomination, and instantly resigned. That was what the brethren of the Elysée wanted. On Sunday the 30th General Lawæstine was appointed to the command. He was a man who had fought in the great wars, but, now in his grey hairs, he was not too proud to accept the part designed for him. His function was, not to lead the force of which he took the command, but to prevent it from acting. It was unnecessary to admit either Lawæstine or Vieyra to a complete knowledge of the plot, because all that they were to do was to frustrate the assembly of the National Guard by withholding all orders and preventing the drums from beating to arms.

The army.

Of course the engine on which the brethren of the Elysée rested their main hopes was the army; and it was known that the remembrance of humiliating conflicts in the streets of Paris had long been embittering the temper in which the troops regarded the people of the capital. Moreover, it happened that at this time the Legislative Assembly had been agitated by a discussion which inflamed the troops with fresh anger against civilians in general, but more especially against the Parisians, against the representatives of the people, and against statesmen and politicians of all kinds. A portion of the Chambers, foreseeing that the army might be used against the freedom of the Legislative Body, had desired that the Assembly should avail itself of a provision in the Constitution which empowered it,

not only to have an armed force for its protection, but to have that force under the order of its own nominee. This was a scheme which shocked the mind of the army. In France, of late years, the Minister of War had always been a soldier, and an order from him (though it was in reality the order of a member of the civil Government) was habitually regarded by military men as the order of a General having supreme command. A proposal to change this system by giving to the Assembly a direct control over a portion of the land-forces could be easily represented to the soldiery as a plan for withdrawing the French army from the control of its Generals, and placing it under the command of men whom the soldiers called "lawyers." Seen in this light, the project so exasperated the feelings of the troops, that if it had been carried they would probably have been stirred up at once to effect by force a violent change of the Constitution. The measure was rejected; but anger is not always appeased by the removal of the kindling motive; and the soreness created by the mere agitation of the question had been so well kept up by the means employed for the purpose, that the garrison of Paris now came to look upon the people with a well-defined feeling of spite.

Its indignation at M. Baze's proposal.

Care had been taken to bring into Paris and its neighbourhood the regiments most likely to serve the purpose of the Elysée, and to give the command to generals who might be expected to act without scruples. The forces in Paris and its neighbour-

Selection of regiments and of officers for the Army of Paris.

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hood were under the orders of General Magnan. At the time of Louis Napoleon's descent upon the coast near Boulogne, Magnan had had the misfortune to be singled out by the Prince as a person to whom it was fitting to offer a bribe of £4000. He had also had the misfortune to be detected in continuing his intercourse with the officer who had thought it safe to come with a proposal like that into the presence of a French general. Magnan did not conceal his willingness to go all lengths, and the brethren, it appears, wished to bring him completely into the plot,* but his panegyrist (not seeing, perhaps, the full import of his disclosure) causes it to be known that the General, though ready to act against Paris and against the Assembly, declined to risk his safety by avowedly joining in the plot. "He "expressly requested," says Granier de Cassaignac, "not to be apprised until the moment for taking the "necessary dispositions and mounting on horseback."** In other words, though he was willing to use the forces under his command in destroying the Constitution, and in effecting such slaughter as might be needed for the purpose, he refused to dispense with the screen afforded by an order from the Minister of War. In the event of the enterprise failing he would be able to say, "I refused to participate in "any plot. The duty of a soldier is obedience. Here "is the order which I received from General St

* This is inferred from what follows.

** Granier de Cassaignac, vol. ii.

"Arnaud. I did no more than obey my commanding "officer." CHAP. XIV.

On the 27th of November, however, this Magnan assembled twenty generals whom he had under his command, and gave them to understand that they might soon be called upon to act against Paris and against the Constitution. They promised a zealous and thoroughgoing obedience; and although every one of them, from Magnan downwards, was to have the pleasing shelter of an order from his superior officer, they all seem to have imagined that their determination was of the sort which mankind call heroic; for their panegyrist relates with pride that when Magnan and his twenty generals were entering into this league and covenant against the people of Paris, they solemnly embraced one another.* Meeting of twenty generals at Magnan's house.

From time to time the common soldiery were gratified with presents of food and wine, as well as with an abundance of flattering words; and their exasperation against the civilians was so well kept alive, that men used to African warfare were brought into the humour for calling the Parisians "Bedouins." There was massacre in the very sound. The army of Paris was in the temper required. The Army encouraged in its hatred of the people.

It was necessary for the plotters to have the concurrence of M. St Georges, the director of the State printing-office. M. St Georges was suborned. Then all was ready.

* Granier de Cassaignac, vol. ii.

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Assemoly at the Elysée on Monday night.

Vieyra's errand.

On the Monday night between the 1st and the 2d of December the President had his usual assembly at the Elysée. Ministers who were loyally ignorant of what was going on were mingled with those who were in the plot. Vieyra was present. He was spoken to by the President, and he undertook that the National Guard should not beat to arms that night. He went away, and it is said that he fulfilled his humble task by causing the drums to be mutilated. At the usual hour the assembly began to disperse, and by eleven o'clock there were only three guests who remained. These were Morny (who had previously taken care to show himself at one of the theatres), Maupas, and St Arnaud, formerly Le Roy. There was, besides, an orderly officer of the President, called Colonel Beville, who was initiated in the secret. Persigny, it seems, was not present. Morny, Maupas, and St Arnaud went with the President into his cabinet; Colonel Beville followed them.* Mocquard, the private secretary of the President, was in the secret, but it does not appear that he was in the room at this time. Fleury too, it seems, was away; he was probably on an errand which tended to put an end to the hesitation of his more elderly comrades, and drive them to make the venture. They were to strike the blow that night. They deliberated, but in the absence of Fleury their council was incomplete, because at the very moment when perhaps their

Before midnight several of the confederates assemble in an inner room.

* Granier de Cassaignac, vol. ii.

doubts and fears were inclining them still to hold back, Fleury, impetuous and resolute, might be taking a step which must needs push them forward. By-and-by they were apprised that an order which had been given for the movement of a battalion of gendarmerie had duly taken effect without exciting remark. It is probable that the execution of this delicate movement was the very business which Fleury had gone to witness with his own eyes, and that it was he who brought the intelligence of its complete success to the Elysée. Perhaps also he showed that, after the step which had just been taken, it would be dangerous to stop short, for the plotters now passed into action. The President intrusted a packet of manuscripts to Colonel Beville, and despatched him to the State printing-office.

The President intrusts a packet to Colonel Beville.

It was in the streets which surround this building that the battalion of gendarmerie had been collected. When Paris was hushed in sleep, the battalion came quietly out, and folded round the State printing-office. From that moment until their work was done the printers were all close captives, for no one of them was suffered to go out. For some time they were kept waiting. At length Colonel Beville came from the Elysée with his packet of manuscripts. These papers were the proclamations required for the early morning, and M. St Georges, the Director, gave orders to put them into type. It is said that there was something like resistance; but in the end, if not at first, the printers obeyed. Each compositor

Transaction at the State printing-office.

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stood whilst he worked between two policemen, and the manuscript being cut into many pieces, no one could make out the sense of what he was printing.

Tenor of the Proclamations.

By these proclamations the President asserted that the Assembly was a hotbed of plots; declared it dissolved; pronounced for universal suffrage; proposed a new constitution; vowed anew that his duty was to maintain the Republic; and placed Paris and the twelve surrounding departments under martial law. In one of the proclamations he appealed to the army, and strove to whet its enmity against civilians by reminding it of the defeats inflicted upon the troops in 1830 and 1848.*

Letters dismissing Ministers not in the plot.

The President wrote letters dismissing the members of the Government who were not in the plot; but he did not cause these letters to be delivered until the following morning. He also signed a paper appointing Morny to the Home Office.

Hesitation at the Elysée.

The night was advancing. Some important steps had been taken, but still, though highly dangerous, it was not absolutely impossible for the plotters to stop short. They could tear up the letters which purported to dismiss the Ministers, and although they could not hope to prevent the disclosures which the printers would make as soon as they were released

* Granier de Cassaignac, vol. ii. See also the *Annuaire* for 1851. This last publication (which must be distinguished from the *Annuaire des Deux Mondes*) gives an account of the events of December, written in a spirit favourable to the Elysée; but the Appendix contains a full collection of official documents.

from captivity, it was not too late to keep back the words, and even the general tenor, of the Proclamations. But the next steps were of such a kind as to be irrevocable.

Fleury drags them on.

It is said that at this part of the night the spirit of some of the brethren was cast down, and that there was one of them who shrank from farther action; but Fleury, they say, got into a room alone with the man who wanted to hang back, and then, locking the door and drawing a pistol, stood and threatened his agitated friend with instant death if he still refused to go on.*

At three o'clock the order from the Minister of War is in the hands of Magnan.

What is certain is, that, whether in hope or whether in fear, the plotters went on with their midnight task. The order from the Minister of War was probably signed by half-past two in the morning, for at three it was in the hands of Magnan.**

Maupas's arrangements for the intended arrests.

At the same hour Maupas (assigning for pretext the expected arrival of foreign refugees) caused a number of Commissaries to be summoned in all haste to the Prefecture of Police. At half-past three in the morning these men were in attendance; Maupas received each of them separately, and gave to each distinct instructions. It was then that for the first time the main secret of the confederates passed into

* I have thought it right to introduce this account under a form indicating that it is based on mere rumour, but I entertain no doubt that the incident has been declared to be true by one of the two persons who stood face to face in that room.

** Granier de Cassaignac, vol. ii.

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the hands of a number of subordinate agents. During some hours of that night every one of those humble Commissaries had the destinies of France in his hands; for he might either obey the Minister, and so place his country in the power of the Elysée; or he might obey the law, denounce the plot, and bring its contrivers to trial. Maupas gave orders for the seizure at the same minute of the foremost Generals of France, and several of her leading Statesmen. Parties of the police, each under the orders of a Commissary, were to be at the doors of the persons to be arrested some time beforehand, but the seizures were not to take place until a quarter past six.*

Disposition of the troops.

At six o'clock a brigade of infantry, under Forey, occupied the Quai d'Orsay; another brigade, under Dulac, occupied the garden of the Tuileries; another brigade, under Cotte, occupied the Place de la Concorde; and another brigade of infantry, under Canrobert, with a whole division of cavalry under Korte, and another brigade of cavalry under Reybell, was posted in the neighbourhood of the Elysée.** It would seem that the main objects aimed at by those who thus placed the troops were, not at this moment to overawe the whole of Paris, but rather to support the operations of Maupas, and to provide for the safety of the brethren at the Elysée by keeping them close under the shield of the army as long as they

* Granier de Cassaignac, vol. ii.

** Ibid.

remained in Paris, and, if such a step should become necessary, by securing and covering their flight.

Almost at the same time Maupas's orders were carefully obeyed; for at the appointed minute, and whilst it was still dark, the designated houses were entered. The most famous generals of France were seized. General Changarnier, General Bedeau, General Lamoricière, General Cavaignac, and General Leflô were taken from their beds, and carried away through the sleeping city and thrown into prison.* In the same minute the like was done with some of the chief members and officers of the Assembly, and, amongst others, with Thiers, Miot, Baze, Colonel Charras, Roger du Nord, and several of the democratic leaders. Some men, believed to be the chiefs of secret societies, were also seized.** The general object of these night-arrests was that, when morning broke, the army should be without generals inclined to observe the law, that the Assembly should be without the machinery for convoking it, and that all the political parties in the State should be paralysed by the disappearance of their chiefs. The number of men thus seized in the dark was seventy-eight. Eighteen of these were members of the Assembly.***

The arrests of the principal Generals and of prominent Statesmen.

Whilst it was still dark, Morny, escorted by a body of infantry, took possession of the Home Office,

Morny takes possession of the Home Office, and begins to use its power.

* Granier de Cassaignac, vol. ii.
** Ibid.
*** Ibid.

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and prepared to touch the springs of that wondrous machinery by which a clerk can dictate to a nation. Already he began to tell forty thousand communes of the enthusiasm with which the sleeping city had received the announcement of measures not hitherto disclosed.

When the light of the morning dawned, people saw the Proclamations on the walls, and slowly came to hear that numbers of the foremost men of France had been seized in the night-time, and that every General to whom the friends of law and order could look for help was lying in one or other of the prisons.

Newspapers seized and stopped.

The newspapers, to which a man might run in order to know, and know truly, what others thought and intended, were all seized and stopped.

Meeting of the Assembly.

The gates of the Assembly were closed and guarded, but the Deputies, who began to flock thither, found means to enter by passing through one of the official residences which formed part of the building. They had assembled in the Chamber in large numbers, and some of them having caught Dupin, their reluctant President, were forcing him to come and take the chair, when a body of infantry burst in and drove them out, striking some of them with the butt-ends of their muskets. Almost at the same time a number of Deputies who had gathered about the side-entrance of the Assembly were roughly handled and dispersed by a body of light infantry. Twelve Depu-

It is dispersed by troops.

ties were seized by the soldiers, and carried off prisoners.* CHAP. XIV.

In the course of the morning the President, accompanied by his uncle, Jerome Bonaparte, and Count Flahault,** and attended by many general officers and a numerous staff, rode through some of the streets of Paris. It would seem that his theatric bent had led Prince Louis to expect from this ride a kind of triumph, upon which his fortunes would hinge; and certainly the unpopularity of the Assembly and the suddenness and perfection of the blow which he had struck in the night, gave him fair grounds for his hope; but he was hardly aware of the light in which his personal pretensions were regarded by the keen laughing people of Paris. The moment when they would cease to use laughter against him was very near, but it had not yet come. Moreover, he did not bring himself to incur the risk which was necessary for obtaining an acclaim of the people, for he clung to the streets and the quays which were close under the dominion of the troops. Upon the whole, the reception he met with seems to have been neither friendly nor violently hostile, but chilling, and in a quiet way scornful. The President's ride.

It seems that after meeting this check his spirit

* La Vérité, "Recueil d'Actes Officielles."

** I imagine that, before the night of the 1st of December, Count Flahault had some knowledge of what was going to be done.

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suffered collapse. Once again, though not so hopelessly as at Strasburg and Boulogne, he had encountered the shock of the real world. And again, as before, the shock felled him. Nor was it strange that he should be abashed and desponding: obeying his old propensity, he had prepared and appointed for the Austerlitz day a great scenic greeting between himself on the one hand, and on the other a mighty nation. When, leaving the room where all this had been contrived and rehearsed, he came out into the free air, and rode through street after street, it became every minute more certain that Paris was too busy, too grave, too scornful to think of hailing him Emperor; nay, strange to say, the people, being fastidious or careless, or imperfectly aware of what had been done, refused to give him even that wondering attention which seemed to be insured to him by the transactions of the foregoing night; and yet, there they were — the proffered Cæsar and his long-prepared group of Captains — sitting published on the backs of real horses, with appropriate swords and dresses. Perhaps what a man in this plight might the most hate would be the sun — the cold December sun. Prince Louis rode home, and went in out of sight.

Seclusion and gloom of Prince Louis.

Thenceforth, for the most part, he remained close shut up in the Elysée. There, in an inner room, still decked in red trousers, but with his back to the daylight, they say he sat bent over a fireplace

for hours and hours together, resting his elbows on his knees, and burying his face in his hands.

Measures for sheltering him from alarming messengers.

What is better known is, that in general, during this period of danger, tidings were not suffered to go to him straight. It seems that, either in obedience to his own dismal instinct, or else because his associates had determined to prevent him from ruining them by his gloom, he was kept sheltered from immediate contact with alarming messengers. It was thought more wholesome for him to hear what Persigny or the resolute Fleury might think it safe to tell him, than to see with his own eyes an aide-de-camp fresh come from St Arnaud or Magnan, or a commissary full fraught with the sensations which were shaking the health of Maupas.

Meeting of the Assembly in another building.

Its decrees.

Troops ascend the stairs, but hesitate to use force.

Driven from their Chamber, the Deputies assembled at the Mayoralty of the 10th arrondissement. There, upon the motion of the illustrious Berryer, they resolved that the act of Louis Bonaparte was a forfeiture of the Presidency, and they directed the judges of the Supreme Court to meet and proceed to the judgment of the President and his accomplices. These resolutions had just been voted, when a battalion of the Chasseurs de Vincennes entered the courtyard of the Mayoralty, and began to ascend the stairs. One of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly went out and summoned the soldiers to stop, and leave the Chamber free. The officer appealed to felt the hatefulness or the danger of the duty intrusted

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to him, and, declaring that he was only an instrument, he said he would refer for guidance to his chief.*

Presently afterwards several battalions of the line under the command of General Forey came up and surrounded the Mayoralty. The Chasseurs de Vincennes were ordered to load. By-and-by two Commissaries of Police came to the door, and announcing that they had orders to clear the hall, entreated the Assembly to yield. The Assembly refused. A third Commissary came, using more imperative language, but he also seems to have shrunk back when he was made to see the lawlessness of the act which he was attempting. At length an Aide-de-camp of General Magnan came with a written order directing the officer in command of the battalion to clear the hall, to do this if necessary by force, and to carry off to the prison of Mazas any Deputies offering resistance. By his way of framing this order, Magnan showed how he crouched under his favourite shelter, for in it he declared that he acted "in consequence of the orders of the Minister of War."** The number of Deputies present at this moment was two hundred and twenty. The whole Assembly declared that they resisted, and would yield to nothing short of force. In the absence of Dupin,

Written orders from Magnan to clear the hall.

The Assembly refuses to yield except to force.

* La Vérité, "Recueil d'Actes Officielles."

** Ibid.

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M. Benoist d'Azy had been presiding over the Assembly, and both he and one of the Vice-Presidents were now collared by officers of police and led out. The whole Assembly followed, and, enfolded between files of soldiery, was marched through the streets. General Forey rode by the side of the column. The captive Assembly passed through the Rue de Grenelle, the Rue St. Guillaume, the Rue Neuve de l'Université, the Rue de Beaune, and finally into the Quai d'Orsay. The spectacle of France thus marched prisoner through the streets seems to have pained the people who saw it, but the pain was that of men who, witnessing by chance some disagreeable outrage, feel sorry that some one else does not prevent it, and then pass on. The members of the Assembly, trusting too much to mere law and right, had neglected or failed to provide that there should be a great concourse of people in the neighbourhood of the hall where they met. Those who saw this ending of free institutions were casual bystanders, and were gathered, it seems, in no great numbers. There was no storm of indignation. In an evil hour the Republicans had made it a law that the representatives of the people should be paid for their services. This provision, as was natural, had brought the Assembly into discredit, for it destroyed the ennobling sentiment with which a free people is accustomed to regard its Parliament. The Paris workman, brave and warlike, but shrewd and somewhat

The whole Assembly taken prisoners by the troops and marched to the Quai d'Orsay.

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envious, compared the amount of his day's earning with the wages of the Deputies, and it did not seem to him that the right cause to stand up for was the cause of men who were hired to be patriots at the rate of twenty-five francs a-day. Still, by his mere taste, and his high sense of the difference between what is becoming and what is ignoble, he was inclined to feel hurt by the sight of what he witnessed. In this doubtful temper the Paris workman stood watching, and saw his country slide down from out of the rank of free States. The gates of the D'Orsay barrack were opened, and the Assembly was marched into the court. Then the gates closed upon them.*

The Assembly imprisoned in the D'Orsay barrack.

It was now only two o'clock in the afternoon; but darkness was wanted to hide the thing which was next to be done, and the members of the Assembly were kept prisoners all the day in the barrack. At half-past four, three Deputies who had been absent came to the barrack and caused themselves to be made prisoners with the two hundred and twenty already there; and at half-past eight in the evening the twelve Deputies who had been seized by the troops at the house of the Assembly were brought to the barrack, so that the number of Deputies there imprisoned was now raised to two hundred and thirty-two.

The members of the Assembly carried off

At a quarter before ten o'clock at night a large

* La Vérité, "Recueil d'Actes Officielles."

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to different prisons in felons' vans.

number of the windowless vans which are used for the transport of felons were brought into the court of the barrack, and into these the two hundred and thirty-two members of the Assembly were thrust. They were carried off, — some to the Fort of Mount Valerian, some to the fortress of Vincennes, and some to the prison of Mazas. Before the dawn of the 3d of December all the eminent members of the Assembly, and all the foremost generals of France, were lying in prison; for now (besides General Changarnier, and General Bedau, General Lamoricière, General Cavaignac, and General Leflô; and besides Thiers, and Colonel Charras, and Roger du Nord, and Miot; and Baze, and the others who had been seized the night before, and were still held fast in the jails) there were in prison two hundred and thirty-two of the representatives of the people, including, amongst others of wide renown, Berryer, Odillon Barrot, Barthélemy St Hilaire, Gustave de Beaumont, Benoist d'Azy, the Duc de Broglie, Admiral Cecile, Chambolle, De Corcelles, Dufaure, Duvergier de Hauranne, De Falloux, General Lauriston, Oscar Lafayette, Lanjuinais, Lasteyrie, the Duc de Luines, the Duc de Montebello, General Radoult-Lafosse, General Oudinot, De Remusat, and the wise and gifted De Tocqueville. Amongst the men imprisoned there were twelve Statesmen who had been Cabinet Ministers, and nine of these had been chosen by the President himself.*

The quality of the men imprisoned.

* The facts mentioned in the above paragraph are not, I believe,

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Quality of the men who imprisoned them.

These were the sort of men who were within the walls of the prisons. Those who threw them into prison were Prince Louis Bonaparte, Morny, Maupas, and St Arnaud formerly Le Roy, all acting with the advice and consent of Fialin de Persigny, and under the propulsion of Fleury. It is true that the army was aiding, but it has been seen that Magnan, who commanded it, had taken care to screen himself under the orders of the Minister of War; and in the event of his being brought to trial he would, no doubt, labour to show that in doing as he did, and in effecting the midnight seizure and imprisonment of his country's greatest commanders, he was an instrument, and not a contriver.

Sitting of the Supreme Court.

By the laws of the Republic, the duty of taking cognisance of offences against the Constitution was cast upon the Supreme Court. The Court was sitting, when an armed force entered the hall, and the judges were driven from the bench, but not until they had made a judicial order for the impeachment of the President. Before the Judges were thrust down they adjourned the Court to a day "to be named "hereafter," and they had the spirit to order a notice of the impeachment to be served upon the President at the Elysée.* If the process-server encountered

The Judges forcibly driven from the bench.

controverted in any important point; but the most authoritative and succinct account of what passed will be found in the well-known letter of M. de Tocqueville.

* "Bulletin Français."

Colonel Fleury at the Elysée, he would soon find that Fleury was not the man who would suffer his gloomy master to be depressed by the sight of a man with an ugly summons from a Court of Law.

Circumstances which rendered it imprudent to resort to insurrection for the defence of the laws.

The ancient courage of the Parisians had accustomed them to the thought of encountering wrong by an armed resistance; but there were many causes which rendered it unwise for them at that moment to appeal to force. The events of 1848, and the doctrines of the sect called Socialists, had filled men's minds with terror. People who had known what it was to be for months and months together in actual fear for their lives and for their goods, were brought down into a condition of mind which made them willing to side with any executive government however lawless, against any kind of insurrection however righteous. Moreover, the feeling of contempt with which the President had been regarded by many was not immediately changed by the events of the 2d of December. It was effectually changed, as will be seen, by the carnage of the 4th; but before the afternoon of that day, the very extravagance of the outrage which had been perpetrated so reminded men of the invasion of Strasburg and the grotesque descent upon Boulogne, that, during the fifty-four hours which followed upon the dawn of the 2d, the indignation of the public was weakened by its sense of the ridiculous. The contemptuous cry of "Soulouque!" indicated that Paris was comparing Louis Napoleon

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to the negro Emperor who had travestied the achievements of the First Bonaparte; and there were many to whom it seemed that his mimicry of the 18th Brumaire belonged to exactly the same class of enterprises as his mimicry of the return from Elba. Plainly the difference was, that this time, instead of having only a few dresses and counterfeit flags, he commanded the resources of the most powerful executive government in the world; but still there was a somewhat widespread belief that the President was tumbling as fast as was necessary, and would soon be defeated and punished. Besides, by the contrivance already described, the plotters had paralysed the National Guard. Moreover, it would seem that the great body of the working-men did not conceive themselves to be hurt by what had been done. Universal suffrage, and the immediate privilege of choosing a dictator for France, were offerings well fitted to win over many honest though credulous labourers, and the baser sort, whose vice is envy, were gratified by what had been done; for they loved to see the kind of inversion which was implied in the fact that men like Lamoricière, and Bedeau, and Cavaignac, like De Luines, like De Tocqueville, and the Duc de Broglie, could be shut up in a jail or thrown into a felon's van by persons like Morny, and Maupas, and St Arnaud formerly Le Roy. Thus there was no sufficing material for the immediate formation of insurgent forces in Paris. The rich and the middle

classes were indignant, but they had a horror of insurrection; and the poor had less dread of insurrection, but then they were not indignant. It is known, moreover, that for the moment there was no fighting power in Paris. Paris has generally abounded in warlike and daring men, who love fighting for fighting's sake; but, for the time, this portion of the French community had been crushed by the result of the great street-battle of June 1848, and the seizures and banishments which followed the defeat of the insurgents. The men of the barricades had been stripped of their arms, deprived of their leaders, and so thinned in numbers as to be unequal to any serious conflict, and their helplessness was completed by the sudden disappearance of the street captains and the chiefs of secret societies, who had been seized in the night between the 1st and 2d of December.

The Committee of Resistance.

Still there was a remnant of the old insurrectionary forces which was willing to try the experiment of throwing up a few barricades, and there was, besides, a small number of men who were impelled in the same direction by motives of a different and almost opposite kind. These last were men too brave, too proud, too faithful in their love of right and freedom, to be capable of acquiescing for even a week in the transactions of the December night. The foremost of these was the illustrious Victor Hugo. He and some of the other members of the Assembly who had

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escaped seizure, formed themselves into a Committee of Resistance, with a view to assert by arms the supremacy of the law. This step they took on the 2d of December.

Attempted rising in the Faubourg St Antoine.

Several members of the Assembly went into the Faubourg St Antoine, and strove to raise the people. These deputies were Schœlcher, Baudin, Aubry, Duval, Chaix, Malardier, and De Flotte, and they were vigorously supported by Cournet, whose residence became their headquarters, and by Xavier Durrieu, Kesler, Ruin, Lemaitre, Wabripon, Le Jeune, and other men connected with the democratic press. More, it would seem, by their personal energy than by the aid of the people, these men threw up a slight barricade at the corner of the Rue Ste Marguerite. Against this there marched a battalion of the 19th Regiment; and then there occurred a scene which may make one smile for a moment, and may then almost force one to admire the touching pedantry of brave men, who imagined that, without policy or warlike means, they could be strong with the mere strength of the law. Laying aside their fire-arms, and throwing across their shoulders scarfs which marked them as Representatives of the People, the Deputies ranged themselves in front of the barricade, and one of them, Charles Baudin, held ready in his hand the book of the Constitution. When the head of the column was within a few yards of the barricade, it was halted. For some moments there was

The barricade of the Rue Ste Marguerite.

silence. Law and Force had met. On the one side was the Code democratic, which France had declared to be perpetual; on the other a battalion of the line. Charles Baudin, pointing to his book, began to show what he held to be the clear duty of the battalion; but the whole basis of his argument was an assumption that the law ought to be obeyed; and it seems that the officer in command refused to concede what logicians call the "major premiss," for, instead of accepting its necessary consequence, he gave an impatient sign. Suddenly the muskets of the front-rank men came down, came up, came level; and in another instant their fire pelted straight into the group of the scarfed Deputies. Baudin fell dead, his head being shattered by more than one ball. One other was killed by the volley; several more were wounded. The book of the Constitution had fallen to the ground, and the defenders of the law recurred to their fire-arms. They shot the officer who had caused the death of their comrade and questioned their major premiss. There was a fight of the Homeric sort for the body of Charles Baudin. The battalion won it. Four soldiers carried it off.* Plainly this attempted insurrection in the Faubourg St Antoine was without the support of the multitude. It died out.

Barricades in central Paris.

The Committee of Resistance now caused barricades to be thrown up in that mass of streets be-

* Xavier Durrieu, pp. 23, 24.

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tween the Hôtel de Ville and the Boulevard, which is the accustomed centre of an insurrection in Paris; but they were not strong enough to occupy the houses, and therefore the troops passed through the streets without danger, and easily took every barricade which they encountered. When the troops retired the barricades again sprang up, but only to be again taken. This state of things continued during part of the 3d of December; but afterwards the efforts of the troops were relaxed, and, during the night and the whole forenoon of the next day, the formation of barricades in the centre of Paris was allowed to go on without encountering serious interruption.*

State of Paris at two o'clock on the 4th of Dec.

At two o'clock in the afternoon of the 4th, the condition of Paris was this: — The mass of streets which lies between the Boulevard and the neighbourhood of the Hôtel de Ville was barricaded, and held without combating by the insurgents; but the rest of the city was free from grave disturbance. The army was impending. It was nearly forty-eight thousand strong,* and comprised a force of all arms, including cavalry, infantry, artillery, engineers, and gendarmes. Large bodies of infantry were so posted that brigades advancing from all the quarters of the compass could simultaneously converge upon the barricaded district. Besides that, by the means already

Attitude of the troops.

* Magnan's Despatch, "Moniteur."

** 47,928.

shown, the troops had been wrought into a feeling of hatred against the people of Paris, they had clearly been made to understand that they were to allow no consideration for bystanders to interfere with their fire, that they were to give no quarter, and that they were to put to death not only the combatants whom they might see in arms against them, but those also who, without having been seen in the act, might nevertheless be deemed to have taken part against them. When it is remembered that the duty — the judicial duty — of bringing people within this last category was cast upon raging soldiers, it will be clear that the army of Paris was brought into the streets with instructions well fitted to bring about the events which marked the afternoon of the 4th of December.* For reasons which then remained unknown, the troops were abstaining from action, and there was a good distance between the heads of the columns and the outposts of the insurgents.

Hesitation of Magnan.

It is plain that, either because of his own hesitation, or because of the hesitation of the President or M. St Arnaud, the General in command of the army was hanging back;** and in truth, though the mere

* My knowledge as to what the troops were made to understand is derived from a source highly favourable to the Elysée.

** Magnan, in his Despatch, accounts for his delay in words which tend to justify the conclusion of those who believe that the opportunity of inflicting slaughter on the people of Paris was deliberately sought

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physical task which he had to perform was a slight one, Magnan could not but see that, politically, he had got into danger. The mechanical arrangements of the night of the 2d of December had met with a success which was wondrously complete; but in other respects the enterprise of the Elysian brethren seemed to be failing, for no one of mark and character had come forward to abet the President. There were many lovers of order and tranquillity who wished the President to succeed in overthrowing the Constitution, or giving it the needful wrench; but they had assumed that he would not engage in any enterprise of this sort without the support of some, at least, of the Statesmen who were the known champions of the cause of order. Those whose views had lain in this direction were shocked out of their hopes when, on the 2d of December, they came to find that all the honoured defenders of the cause of order had been thrown into prison, and that the persons who were sheltering the President by their concurrence and their moral sanction, were Morny, and Maupas or De Maupas, and St Arnaud formerly Le Roy. The list of the Ministry, which was published on the

His probable grounds.

Apparent terror of the plotters on account of their continued isolation.

for and prepared; but I am not inclined to believe that for such an object a French general would throw away the first seven hours of a short December day, and therefore, so far as concerns his motives, I reject Magnan's statement. I consider that the disclosures made before the Chamber of Peers, in 1840, give me a right to use my own judgment in determining the weight which is due to this person's assertions.

following day, contained no name held in honour; and the plotters of the Elysée, terrified, as it seems, at the state of isolation in which they were placed, resorted to a curious stratagem. They formed what they called a "Consultative Commission," and promulgated a decree which purported to appoint as members of the body, not only most of the plotters themselves, and others whose services they could command, but also some eighty other men who were eminent for their character and station.* In so far as it represented these eighty men to be members of the Commission, the decree was a counterfeit. One after another, the men with the honoured names repudiated the notion that they had consented to go and "consult" with Louis Bonaparte, and Morny, and Fleury, and Maupas, and St Arnaud formerly Le Roy.** The Elysée derived great advantage from this stratagem, because for many precious hours, and even days, it kept the country from knowing what was the number and what was the quality of the persons who were really abetting the President; but Magnan of course knew the truth, and when he found, on the morning of the 4th of December, that even the complete success of all the arrangements of the foregoing Tuesday had not been hitherto

Stratagem of forming the "Consultative "Commission."

* "Annuaire," appendix.

** Their letters to this effect appeared from time to time in the English journals.

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puissant enough to bring to the Elysée the support of men of weight and character, he had grounds for the alarm which seems to have been the cause of his inaction.

For, regarded in connection with the state of isolation in which the plotters still remained, the insurrection, feeble as it was, became a source of grave danger to the General in command of the troops. It would have been no new thing to have to act against insurgents in vindication of the law, and under the orders of what had been commonly called a "Government;" but this time the law was on the side of the insurgents, and the knot of men who had got the control of the offices of the State were not so circumstanced in point of repute as to be able to make up for the want of legal authority by the weight of their personal character. Therefore it was natural for Magnan, notwithstanding his cherished order from the Minister of War, to think a good deal of what might happen to him, if perchance, at the very moment when he was taking upon his hands the blood of the Parisians, the plot of which he was the instrument should after all break down for want of support from men known and honoured as Statesmen.

Magnan at length resolves to act.

But at length perhaps it was effectually explained to Magnan that he must stand or fall with those to whom he was now committed, and that although he

thought to keep himself under the shelter of the "order of the Minister of War," the testimony of any one out of the twenty Generals who met him on the 27th of November would suffice to bring him into nearly the same plight as any of the avowed plotters. A judicious application of this kind of torture would make it unnecessary for Colonel Fleury to show even the hilt of his pistol. At all events, Magnan now at last consented to act against the insurrection. He had thrown away the whole of the morning and the better part of the afternoon, and this on a short December day; but at two o'clock the troops were ordered to advance, and by three all the heads of columns which were converging upon the insurrection from different points were almost close to the several barricades upon which they had marched.

Point of contact between the ground occupied by the troops and that occupied by the insurgents.

The advance-post of the insurgents, at its north-western extremity, was covered by a small barricade, which crossed the Boulevard at a point close to the Gymnase Theatre. Some twenty men, with weapons and a drum taken in part from the "property room" of the theatre, were behind this rampart; and a small flag, which the insurgents had chanced to find, was planted on the top of the barricade.*

* The great barricade in this district was the one which crossed the Boulevard diagonally, near the Porte St Denis. It is not noticed in the text, because the object here is, not to describe in detail

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State of the Boulevard at three o'clock.

Facing this little barricade, at a distance of about a hundred and fifty yards, was the head of the vast column of troops which now occupied the whole of the western Boulevard, and a couple of field-pieces stood pointed towards the barricade. In the neutral space between the barricade and the head of the column the shops and almost all the windows were closed, but numbers of spectators, including many women, crowded the foot-pavement. These gazers were obviously incurring the risk of receiving stray shots. But westward of the point occupied by the head of the column the state of the Boulevards was different. From that point home to the Madeleine the whole carriage-way was occupied by troops; the infantry was drawn up in subdivisions at quarter distance. Along this part of the gay and glittering Boulevard the windows, the balconies, and the foot-pavements were crowded with men and women who were gazing at the military display. These gazers had no reason for supposing that they incurred any danger, for they could see no one with whom the army would have to contend. It is true that notices had been placed upon the walls, recommending people not to encumber the streets, and warning them that they would be liable to be dispersed by the troops

the preparations of the insurgents, but merely to show the state of the Boulevard at the point where their advanced post faced the troops.

without being summoned; but of course those who had chanced to see this announcement naturally imagined that it was a menace addressed to riotous crowds which might be pressing upon the troops in a hostile way. Not one man could have read it as a sentence of sudden death against peaceful spectators.

At three o'clock one of the field-pieces ranged in front of the column was fired at the little barricade near the Gymnase. The shot went high over the mark. The troops at the head of the column sent a few musket-shots in the direction of the barricade, and there was a slight attempt at reply, but no one on either side was wounded; and the engagement, if so it could be called, was so languid and harmless that even the gazers who stood on the foot-pavement, between the troops and the barricade, were not deterred from remaining where they were; and with regard to the spectators further west, there was nothing that tended to cause them alarm, for they could see no one who was in antagonism with the troops. So along the whole Boulevard, from the Madeleine to near the Rue du Sentier, the foot-pavements, the windows, and the balconies still remained crowded with men and women and children, and from near the Rue du Sentier to the little barricade at the Gymnase, spectators still lined the foot-pavement; but in that

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last part of the Boulevard the windows were closed.*

* What I say as to the state of the Boulevard at this time is taken from many concurrent authorities, but Captain Jesse's statement (see *post*) is the most clear and satisfactory so far as concerns what he saw.

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